

The Legend of Yiling Laozu

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The Legend of Yiling Laozu

by [Muggle_Diary](#)

Summary

Yet another time travel story. Wei Ying just says no to the Jiangs, Sunshot campaign, and cultivation sects in general. But very much in love with his husband though.

It is Wei Ying's journey to become the legend himself.

Notes

So, I am back after a long break. It was a tough year for me.

I know there is WIP fic under my name. I will get to that soon. But this fic is my attempt to get out of writing slump. It was easier to start a new story than getting back at an old one.

No need to worry. The whole story is complete. I will update them chapter by chapter after editing a bit, every few days.

Please note that English is my third language and there could be a lot of errors. Please oblige. This story has not been beta read.

Thank you for commenting on my previous stories. I will reply to them soon.

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

One

New Beginnings

Age: 5 years

It was a murky grey morning when Wei Wuxian opened his eyes. He was in a back alley, filled with grime and thrown away waste - toys, clothes, food, and even some old books - collected over time. The air was humid and one could smell the decay of the city, years in the making. The town of Yiling had always been a sterling example of the worst humanity had to offer. Cultivators and civilians alike had given up on this place. It was as though the town was built on the hopelessness of the living, on the burdened souls of the dead.

But years and centuries later, the very same town would be known far and wide for one man who was the definition of kindness and grace. A deity of justice and benevolence. For thousands of years to come the people would be talking about the legend of Yiling Laozu. The tales of his deeds and his epic romance with one Hanguang-Jun would be made into poems, plays, and movies, stories passed from parents to their children, talked about around campfires, exchanged between lovers and so it lived on..

But at that moment, on that very grey morning, the legend was still in the making. He was still - at a tender age of five - a puny little street rat.

“Urghhh! What the hell!” Wuxian exclaimed as he woke up. The first thing he noticed was how tiny he seemed. “What the hell!” he cursed again. At once realised that he was back to his five year old self, just after the death of his parents. The last thing he remembered was an ancient array - at least 10,000 years old, by the looks of it - he was breaking into along with his husband to save a bunch of villagers. It was a distant land, uncharted territories they had come across in their travels. If he had come back, then there was a high chance that his husband was back too since they were together within the radius of the array. Oh! He missed his husband so badly. He would be so cute too, being all tiny and chubby. But he cannot do anything but miss his Lan Zhan for the time being, given the fact that Wuxian was coreless to send any message and too poor to travel. There was very limited to what he could do in a five year old body. He doubted if his Lan Zhan could come to him either because who would

listen to a small child? No. The best course of action would be to raise himself and build his core as soon as possible.

Wuxian pondered for a moment if he wanted to be part of the Jiangs in this life as well and the answer was a resounding no. Let that be in the past. He had been filial and honoured his upbringing. No matter what Jiang Wanyin said otherwise, he had done his duty, all his debts were paid in full as one should in his last life. He always lived with no regrets. But this time around there was no need to purposefully offer himself for the one sided loyalties and selfish interests of the sect. No, this time he would live as he wished with his husband. There was still a couple of years for the Jiang sect leader to come searching for him. He would stay in Yiling till then, build his core, make some money, and leave this town to roam the land. He had a husband to catch up to.

So, the former Yiling Laozu and the current five year old Wei Wuxian did the only sane thing he could. He went to the Burial mounds. The place welcomed him like a prodigal son returned. He settled at the edge of the Burial mounds. During the day he would visit the Yiling town working odd jobs for money. Sometimes he would sell his paintings. In the evening he would cultivate the spiritual energy and the yin energy to form his core.

In a long research into mo dao in his last life, he had found a balance of yin and yang energies found in nature. Cultivators always called yang energy as spiritual energy and always mistook resentful energy as a yin energy. As Wuxian had mentioned in a Lan class long ago, in his youth, yin energy was also found abundant in nature and it was possible to use it just like yang energy. Because of the cold nature of the yin energy, it was very easy for the resentments to latch on to it and thus very difficult to tame.

The reason why it was difficult to harness the resentments was because most of the people were filled with it. Most of the cultivators had always been a greedy, jealous lot. There was no purity of thought, no kindness and thus their mind was very susceptible for the harm yin energy could create.

Over the years Wuxian had developed a safe method to harness the yin energy and processed that in his meridians. And eventually he had developed a dark crimson core instead of a golden core in Mo Xuan Yu's body. Both yin and yang energy co-existed peacefully and he was able to call on to both, together or separately as he intended. There was even a branch for the studies in mo dao in the Lan sect and along with time Wuxian also had taken in a disciple who was kind, an emphatic soul who could cultivate yin energy without harming their mind. The fact there was only one person apart from Wuxian who was qualified to cultivate yin energy said a lot about the cultivators and the society in general, Wei Wuxian thought so.

Age: 8 years

Within three years, Wei Wuxian formed a crimson core easily. Finally he could make more money making talismans and arrays that would finance his travels. And the moment he formed a core he sent a message to his husband, hoping that Lan Zhan had developed his core too.

It was a secret method known only to both of them and it was based on the specific golden core signature. Wuxian and his husband had together come up with a research on golden cores and how each golden core vibrates with a specific frequency within the dantian and it is unique to every person. It was a natural course of action after knowing that Subian could recognise his golden core even when it was within Jiang Sect leader. On a whim Wuxian had developed a messenger talisman which was specific to Lan Zhan's golden core frequency, because he was bored and because he missed his husband dearly, not having seen him for more than ten days on the account that Lan Zhan was away on a night hunt.

After two months of constant sending of messages, he got a reply from his husband. Lan Zhan developed his core as well. In the next seven years, Wuxian exchanged hundreds of messages while he travelled across the land. He would then go to Cloud Recesses, where his Lan Zhan waited for him.

Age: 9 years

Wei Wuxian left the town of Yiling when he was 9 years old. It was time for the Jiang Sect leader to come for him and he did not want to be there. No one would support a homeless child when a sect leader wants to take him into his sect and the child refuses. It would be sheer idiocy to reject his offer and a good fortune to be studying in a great sect, people would say.

It was better for him to go away to further lands since he had a core now. Before that, he ventured deep into the Burial mounds and spent a month making his spiritual flute, his

beloved ChenQing. For his sword, he would wait for some more time. He knew exactly which sword he would pick, a sword which is destined to be his, in every life.

Two

Chapter Summary

Wei Ying's letters to his husband

Chapter Notes

I grew up in times when there were no mobile phones. The fastest communication was through telephones and then letters. Telephone calling was expensive when we were in different cities (STDs, if anyone remembers). So, when I moved to a different city for further studies, my best friend and I used to write letters to each other, one every two weeks. It used to be around 5-6 pages of A4 sheets, filled with daily anecdotes, poems, small stories, funny incidents etc. Every day I would write a para and once 5-6 pages were filled, I used to post them. She did the same. We did this for four years and then the mobile phones were available.

Letter writing always feels very personal and endearing to me for this reason.

Letters to the husband

Age: 12 years

My dear Hanguang-Jun,

I have missed you so much, my beloved. All these years, only the thought of you, the thought of seeing you again had kept me company. I was never afraid of being alone. But you have spoiled your Wei Ying so much that now he cannot bear this crushing loneliness. Er-ge ge, take responsibility.

Today I saw a white robed man in a town near Qinghe and I was suddenly overcome with homesickness. Once I associated your Lan white with mourning. Now, the very same white is a symbol of peace and serenity I find in your arms. My love, there is nothing I seek more than the comfort of your presence and a place in your lap.

On the other news, I roamed the length and breadth of the Nei lands for a year. There was a village where the young brides were being harassed by a female ghost who died on her wedding day. Jealousy was what made her stay on the land and prevent other weddings from happening. Of course, it was not difficult for your Wei Ying to put the ghost to rest and was handsomely rewarded with a donkey. I have named it Little Apple in remembrance of my first ever donkey.

As I mentioned in my last letter, I also ventured near Xinglu Ridge, Nei's ancestral place. Lan Zhan, I sometimes feel unfair, when I see the hypocrisy of these great clans and sects.

I know, I know, it was not the mo dao that condemned me in my first life, but the fact that a mere son of a servant was more powerful and had a powerful weapon in his hands and the gentry could not take it. On top of that, this son of a servant had the audacity to point fingers at them, pulling out their greed and power hungry rotten cores in the open. A mere son of a servant dared to stand up against them, all their ugly truths laid bare, and they wanted to punish me for it, to put me in my place, starting from Jiang Wanyin himself. And yet, I feel sad that they used mo dao as an excuse when one of their own, one of the gentry sects uses resentment from the beasts to cultivate and they did not hesitate to condemn me.

Darling, do not pout. It was but a momentary pain. Your Wei Ying is fine. But Lan Zhan, should I fight alongside these so called gentry sects in the coming war? Do I want to?

Always Yours,

Wei Ying

Age: 13 years

Darling Lan Zhan,

I do not have much time to write. But, thank you for referring me to Li Bai Yi, the merchant from Caiyi. I met him in Qinghe and I had a nice evening of drinking and conversation late into the night. The flower wine was quite good, with a hint of cherry blossom aftertaste. It had the beautiful mouthfeel of jasmine. (Don't be jealous, er-ge ge. Emperor's Smile is still my favourite). And the man was quite a conversationalist, very talkative. (Yes, I know how it sounds coming from me). The man proved to be a decent and kind person.

So, by next morning we were best of friends and I made a deal with him to sell my Compass of Evil and Spirit Repelling Amulet devices to the common people. He has promised to keep my identity and our deal a secret. For now, I do not want people to know Wei Wuxian. And he has also promised me that his chain of shops across all the sects will sell these devices for as much lower price as possible. This time I have added a small device to these which will absorb the spiritual energy required to run these devices from the air itself. This way, even non-cultivators and common people can use these easily. The only drawback I see is that these tiny devices last only for one year. I am working on a more permanent solution. But till then these have to suffice.

Hanguang-Jun, I will be travelling tomorrow towards the Jins. I will write to you again soon. Till then, know that your husband misses you a lot. Cannot wait to see your pretty face, love.

Always yours,

Wei Ying

Age: 13 years

Beloved husband,

Your Wei Ying's heart is heavy today and his husband is not with him to soothe his hurts. What a tragic tale of sorrow and misery! Today I was a guest of a minor sect called Chang. Good people. This is a sect bordering the Jin land and the land of the Wen Sect. Although, they do associate with the Jin Sect. For all the riches of the Jin sect, their minor sects are perishing slowly under the crushing weight of poverty. And it is not just the case of the sects associated with the Jins. This is the tragedy that could be seen everywhere.

These sects lack proper training and proper knowledge. They need money for the training. They need cultivation manuals, research, journals, proper teachers and so on. Without these, their disciples are mediocre and they can only do night hunting for smaller problems. For major problems, they have to seek help from the great sects and thus need to pay a lot of money for their services. With lack of money, these sects have no way to buy more books and improve their training. This goes on in endless cycles. These great sects hoard not just riches, but also knowledge which makes poor sects more poor with time and weak sects more weak with time. How I wish libraries were available for all! How I wish that cultivation is

accessible to everyone! Lan Zhan, I know you think the same. We have always shared the same dreams and same values, after all.

If everything is fine, I will be reaching the border of the Jin sect in a week.

Always yours,

Wei Ying

Age: 13 years

My dear Lan Zhan,

Today I arrived at the centre of Jin land. It reeks of greed and hunger for power. Nothing has changed and nothing will ever change.

Sometimes I wonder which clan was better? The Qishan Wen or the Lanling Jin? Do I still need to help win a war against one tyrant, only to be replaced by another?

Jin Ling was the only good thing that came out of the Jin Sect. I cannot help but recall the Lan-Jin wedding. I still remember how much you sulked when Sizhui's daughter, your granddaughter wanted to marry Jin Ling's son and would live in Koi Tower. I know you would miss her a lot, And Jin Xuan was such a good boy too. And yet you always glared at that poor boy. It was very funny to see how afraid he was of you, Lan Zhan.

Lan Hua was your favourite of the grandchildren, wasn't she? I know you, my beloved. You cried when you held your only granddaughter for the first time. I was there. And I would remember that moment for all my life. You were so soft, my love. All that arm strength and you held her so delicately. You are always like this. So much strength in your arms, in your broad shoulders. But you are always so soft and delicate to your loved ones. I would know, for all my life I have soaked and breathed in your silken soft love. And you are equally precious to me, my love. Do not doubt that even for a moment. Your love and devotion is a privilege and I am always humbled by the weight of your regard.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age: 14 years

Beloved husband,

It was very bittersweet to visit the land of the lotuses. Although life at the Jiangs was not pleasant, I had managed to form some genuine bonds with the local merchants and farmers here. And how can I forget my shidis and shimeis, looking at me with their curious shiny eyes as I taught them sword forms and archery? But the Jiang sect is different from what I remember from my childhood, Lan Zhan. The air is not light and pleasant anymore. There is a doom of lightning and storm hanging over the whole sect. And the things I heard makes me feel so disappointed. I am appalled at the casual cruelty towards the disciples from the sect madam, the inherent neglect of all from the sect leader himself. So many merchants are slowly drifting away from the Yunmeng Jiang area. There are tales of the unpleasant and outright cruel sect heir. There are scars of lightning on even the smallest and youngest of the disciples for punishments and no one speaks out. No amount of soup can warm their cold hearts, I am told.

As early as I was taken into their sect last time, I knew my role very well. I was to be the shield of the sect heir. I was burdened with the debts that no child had to bear from the moment I stepped in. And yet, I offered my utmost loyalty and sincere love, for they did take from the streets and saved me from starvation. I took on the punishments that were not mine and saved my shidis. I worked hard to get better at fighting, better at cultivating, better at everything so that I could be a better shield and save my martial brother when it comes to that. A shield is supposed to be better than the sect heir. Just look at Wen Chao and Wen Zhuliu. Blinded by their jealousy and insecurities, Jiang Wanyin and Madam Yu did not and would not understand this. For them it was imperative that the sect heir is better than a mere servant. Shijie always offered some comfort. But a small bit of charcoal does not help when the winter is unending and harsh.

Darling, you know my mischievous nature. You were the recipient of it in our early days of acquaintance. But, I played it up for the audience too then. I was the troublemaker who drew attention to himself so that people did not notice the unpleasant character of the one Jiang Wanyin. I was the target everyone, including Madam Yu could focus on. I was the bridge between the town people and the sect. Now the shield is gone and everything is out in the open.

I can see the decline of the great Yunmeng Jiang, with or without the war. Time is the best mirror of all. I could see this once great sect erased from the annals of history just like it did in the last timeline. In the end, karma did reach Jiang Wanyin with all the murders he committed after I died in siege and the appalling neglect of his people in Yunmeng Jiang.

Aiya! Forgive this old man, Lan Zhan. I have become maudlin with age and that just will not do. Come and give your Wei Ying a kiss, darling. That will do the trick.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age 15 years

Lan Zhan,

As I have travelled these years, I have become more and more firm in my decision. This is my second childhood and my third life, and who else but the infamous Yiling Laozu can claim such a thrilling adventure. Fate indeed works in mysterious ways. I decided not to participate in the war, not to help any of these gentry sects. In my last life, I was bound to the Jiang sect. My duty was to fight for them. To do otherwise would have been ungrateful and unfilial. And I have no regrets as well, for the life I led and for the death I embraced. I was and I still am glad that in spite of the whole world against me, I stuck to my values and my principles. And I have no regrets in my second life too, for it led me to you, my beloved, my darling, my er-ge ge.

Lan Zhan, we have seen the aftermath of the war. The true sufferers during and after the war had always been the common people. Their fields were destroyed and their economy was affected. Dead ghosts were more in numbers than the pitiful living. There were demons and yaos and monsters, there were fierce corpses hurting these people. The resentment raged across all lands and these so called gentries were busy fighting for more power, more riches, the very same thing that led to the war in the first place. No one took care of the common people, except you. You were there, my love. You were the Hanguang-Jun. A beacon of light amidst the darkness. I want to follow your lead and go to the people. I want to travel across the war ravaged and neglected lands, and help where I can. What do they care about who are leading sects, who are the gentry, who are the rulers? All these people just want to lead a comfortable life.

I know, my love. You are not as free as myself. While the ties that bound me to the Jiang Sect were of loyalties and debts, your bond with the Lan Clan is of the blood. I know you would fight for your family and your clan. And I will help you, darling. I will help you save your Cloud Recesses. I have a couple of ideas for that. And I have already started inventing devices that will aid in the war. But that is about the extent I would go. I will not directly participate and win the war for them. I will give them tools to fight. Let the gentry fight amongst themselves. And let me be there for the people. This is my greatest wish.

And once you are done helping rebuild the Lan sect after the war, I will not share more of you with your Lans, beloved. Allow your Wei Ying this bit of selfishness.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age 16 years

Hanguang-Jun, Lan Wangji, Lan Zhan, Lan er-ge ge,

You are too cruel to your Wei Ying. You left your husband after a brief reunion. One week was not nearly enough of your company, beloved. And now I am adrift in the memories we created together. I am languishing in the loneliness and emptiness you left in your wake. My days are filled with helping the Dafan wens with their relocation. But my nights, my nights are reserved for you and you alone, my beloved. I ache for your touch and the strength of your arms that hold me in my place and make me take everything you want to offer. I long for the marks you leave in my body like some fine jewels. I am filled with want of your teeth on my skin that tells the world that I belong, that I belong to you and you alone, my love. Do you also think of me like I think of you when you touch yourself? But even that temporary release does not satiate me. I am so greedy for you, for you to fill me up with your release, for me to carry the signs of our passion all the day long only to be recreated again and again at night. Er-ge ge, take responsibility.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age 16 years

Dear Lan Zhan,

Do you remember the face my dear Wen Qing made when we told her we killed the beast Xuanwu? It was so hilarious. But what was not hilarious was what followed after. Her needles still instill some fear in me, even after all these years. Anyway, I digress.

I am writing this to inform you that all the Dafan Wens have been relocated successfully and there are no Dafan wens. Everything went as we had planned. The valley is as beautiful as we had seen last time. It is quite far from cultivation sects, a little bit far from nearest towns and villages, and they plan to make a living as a sect dedicated to healing arts and other skills. They, of course, have changed their names now. They call themselves the Wei sect and they have changed their names to Wei. I was so flustered when they presented me with their decision. Honoured too. I will be forever grateful that I managed to keep them safe and away from the war. That bit of the debt I owed them is fulfilled now and I feel free and my soul feels light.

Lan Zhan, there is only a bit of travel and I will be in Cloud Recesses soon. I cannot wait to lean into the comfort of your arms again, my love.

Always yours,

Wei Ying

Age 16 years

Darling,

I happened to meet Li Bai Yi, the merchant and I received your invitation for the Lan classes for this year. I do not know how you managed to make your uncle send me the invitation when I am nothing but a humble rouge cultivator. But I am glad to spend this time with you, husband. Isn't it funny that we are older than your uncle now? Or at least our souls are.

Soon, my love. I will be with you and you can have your way with your Wei Ying, every which way possible. It would be fun and adventurous to sneak into your room at night. We would be having a scandalous affair under everyone's noses. I get to corrupt the pure and untouchable Second Jade of Lan. Again. Wouldn't that be fun?

Always yours

Wei Ying

Three

Chapter Summary

A brief detour from our Wangxian.

Chapter Notes

So, what do you think?

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

An interlude with Jiang Yanli

Jiang Yanli was peeling lotus seeds for the cakes she would make later in the day when the news of the sudden death of Wei Changze and Cangse Sanren reached the docks of Lotus Pier. There was a storm that day, inside and outside. As the rain lashed on, the thunder almost hid the rage of the Madam of the Jiang sect. The lightning of the Zidian unleashed on the disciples and the training dummies alike almost outshined the lightning across the sky. The fight went on for days. Baseless accusations of infidelity and of illegitimate son were hurled at the sect leader Jiang Fengmian at the mention of the surviving child. Jiang Yanli, huddling with her young brother in a corner, heard every vitriol, every rage filled words that her mother wielded towards her father, with the same finesse and competence as she wielded her favourite Zidian.

She saw her father search for the missing child for a few years only for it to turn out to be a futile effort. The child had vanished from the face of earth and her father could never find him, much to his disappointment. She saw her mother's language turn more and more vulgar with the force of her anger.

Over the years Yanli witnessed her mother using cruelty and anger as her choice of weapon with relish just as her father used indifference and apathy with precision. Every family meal was fraught with tension and an underlying fury, an ugliness which was barely hidden. With time she saw her brother grow with the same cruelty reflected in his actions just as his eyes filled with insecurities and inflated ego of an immature mind. So she hid herself in her

kitchen, with her soups and warm meaningless words, in per passivity. She dreamed of a knight in shining armour coming to her rescue and taking her away towards a beautiful future. Only she knew if the symbol of Sparks Amidst Snow was etched onto the gold armour of her dream knight.

“How dare you slack off on your training! Jiang Cheng, you are so pathetic. Look at the second jade of Lan who formed his core when he was only 9 years old and now he is the most powerful among his peers. The sect heir of the Lan, Lan Xichen is already famous for his skills in cultivation. Nei Mingjue from Qinghe is already known for his exploits in night hunts. Even a rogue cultivator is talked about as if he is better than heirs of gentry sects. And look at you, a sect heir of a great clan and yet you are still core less at the age of 11 years. How will you become the head disciple with this progress? Go kneel in your ancestral hall for six hours and reflect. There will be no food for you today.” The loud lashings of Madam Yu reverberated throughout the Lotus Pier. It even reached Yanli, who was busy in her kitchen. Madam Yu’s tirade did not end with that. Yanli was told that many of the disciples were whipped with Zidian for not having made any progress with their training. One shidi was punished even more for having broken his own arm accidentally.

So, Jiang Yanli, as calm as always, made her famous Pork ribs and Lotus root soup. She sneaked a bowl to her brother, hiding from the eyes of her mother’s servant. “A-cheng, drink this. You will feel better. You know mother cares. It is her way of showing her love for you.” “Of course, a-jie. I will not slack off. I will show everyone that I am better than everyone else” her brother gritted his teeth with determination. “Yes, yes, a-Cheng is the best.” Yanli agreed.

Later, she went to her shidis to offer the comfort of the soup and warm words to sooth the hurts. “You know she cares, right? a-Lin, a-Xie, A-Yang, I know it hurts. But, know that deep down she really cares for you. She really wants you to do better. Do not make mischief anymore, okay? Be good now” She caressed the heads of her young shidis with utmost care. Only she knew if she ignored the incredulous eyes pointed at her before there were murmurs of “Yes, Shijie”, “You are right”, “Yes, of course”. And then her shidis were busy drinking her soup and all was well.

Jiang Cheng was 13 years old when he formed his core and was made the head disciple. Yanli breathed a sigh of relief. She hoped that now her father would be proud of his son, her mother would stop her bouts of rage, and everything would be normal. But things didn't go as she wished. Jiang Cheng proved to be her mother’s son. His form of training the disciples was very similar to mother and distance grew between the other disciples and the sect heir. While other sect heirs were becoming famous for their skills, her brother was infamous for his temper tantrums and the unpleasant air that he always carried with him. There were no more new disciples wanting to be part of the Yunmeng Jiang sect. There were stories of the Jiang

sect heir fighting with the locals and merchants, tales of humiliation of common people of the Yunmeng Jiang, of alienations between the sect and the local establishments or so she was told. She saw traders and merchants slowly leave Yunmeng Jiang. She saw common people relying more and more on rogue cultivators than the Jiang Sect. She heard the whispers of how her mother and later her brother was the reason for the decline of once a great sect.

Her father was even more disappointed and distanced himself from the family and Lotus Pier. He hardly came to family dinners giving sect duties as excuses. Her mother was almost always away with night hunts. And when she was at Lotus Pier, she was always punishing the disciples or criticising her brother. If not, she would be fighting with Jiang Fengmian for petty and trivial, or even imagined offences. There was no peace to be had in all of Lotus Pier and Yanli felt suffocated. Everyday felt gloomy and dreary with no sun in sight. Dreams of her knight in shining armour was the only thing that she had and she held on to it with ferocity. Without this, she has nothing else.

Yet, she felt that something was missing. Rather, *someone* was missing. Yanli felt that things were not supposed to be this way. She vaguely dreamt of an ever smiling face, of a young boy. He was supposed to comfort her and appreciate her and her soups. He was supposed to sooth the rough edges of her brother. He was supposed to challenge her brother to improve. He was supposed to draw her mother's hateful attention so that her brother and other disciples were spared for her rage. He was supposed to make everything better for her. But these hazy dreams of hers were dispersed with the bright morning light. And she would clear her head of these unnecessary thoughts and she would make soup and more soup.

She continued to live her life, being afraid of her mother, yearning for her father's attention, and worried about her brother. She continued to dream about being rescued from her home and taken away to the golden tower where she would spend her life happily, away from all this.

And one day, an invitation arrived from Gusu, requesting Jiang Wanyin to attend that year's classes at Cloud Recesses. It was decided that first and second shidies would join her brother and go to Gusu, along with a couple of more disciples. She made a lot of food for them to eat on the journey. She personally packed her brother's luggage. She sent her brother and other disciples, along with her father.

For a change, she felt hopeful. Now her brother -without the influence of her mother and father- can make new friends and alliances, now her brother can showcase his skills and be praised for it, now her brother can shine for his brilliance just like other sect heirs. A small

part of her, hidden away at the corner of her heart, also hoped that her brother could be friends with her fiancé and she could take one step further realising her dreams.

After her brother left, her life continued at Lotus Pier as usual. But one day, a letter came from Gusu about the brawl between her brother and her fiancé.

And when her father brought her brother back, along with that came the news that her engagement had been cancelled.

She stood helplessly as her life and dreams crashed around her.

She took a deep breath and then calmly went to the kitchen to make soup for her brother.

Chapter End Notes

Wangxian reunion next

Four

Chapter Summary

Reunion we all have been waiting for. Enjoy.

Reunions of lovers

It was almost near sunset when Wei Ying arrived near the edge of a forest bordering a small town and the range of Muxi mountains. And it was only a day's journey on the sword to the village where the Dafan Wens resided. He had already reserved a small room in the only inn present in the nearby town. The lecturers at Gusu were a year away and Wei Ying had almost gone mad with crushing loneliness all these years and he was ecstatic that he could meet husband even before that.

The evening was pleasant. The slanted rays of sunlight created a warm painting on greens of the forest, of shadows and lights. Wei Ying held his breath as he waited for his Lan Zhan. It had been almost ten years since he last saw him and his soul was clawing against skin, fighting to break free, to find his lover and never let go.

"Wei Ying". A voice called out to him from behind.

And that is how, the unmatched, the mighty, the supreme Yiling Laozu was defeated. For no one else would take his name with such care and tenderness. His name from those lips was everything - of love and promise, of care and protection, of home and sanctuary, of strength and stability.

With misty eyes and throat tight with too many emotions, Wei Ying surrendered. Only to his dear, dear Hanguang-Jun would this Yiling Laozu would yield; with his vulnerable parts of the heart laid bare, innards of his underbelly exposed, the tender pieces of his soul offered with utmost devotion, knowing that everything he offered would be cherished and protected

inside the ribs of this man. Oh! Such a pretty, pretty sight, his Lan Zhan. And so cute too, at the age of 16, with those slightly chubby cheeks clinging on to the last bit of the youth.

"Lan Zhan", Wei Ying threw himself onto his husband's arms, with tears falling off of happiness. What a shame too! Meeting after ten years, instead of the fine, smooth, and dignified Yiling Laozu, Wei Ying presented a bumbling, blubbing mess of a husband to his Hanguang-Jun. What a shame, indeed!

Wei Ying was held tightly under Lan Zhan's arms, smothered onto his chest, his sleeves covering most of his being. After a few seconds, WY looked up to his Lan Zhan, with a snoot filled nose and red teary eyes, started beating at his husband's chest with his fist in a bout of childish tantrum and said "Lan Zhan, you cruel, cruel man. . Your Wei Ying has suffered so much without his Hanguang-Jun. Wei Ying was wasting away with yearning, drowning in loneliness. Look at your Wei Ying. He has become so thin. Hold him tight, my beloved, for he will fade away without. Oh! A cruel fate has befallen on your husband!"

"Mn" Lan Zhan replied and tightened his arms around Wei Ying even more. "Missed Wei Ying too" he said, tenderly brushing away the runaway hair from Wei Ying's face, cataloguing all the details of his husband's beautiful face.

Even though it did not matter much to Lan Zhan - for Wei Ying was Wei Ying, even in Mo Xuan Yu's body - this *was* his husband's real face and real body. To see the real Wei Ying - without the ravages of war, without the scars and burdens that no young man should bear, without everyone chipping away Wei Ying's soul and his brightness in the name of debts and false sense of loyalties - something settled in Lan Zhan's very soul.

"Beautiful" Lan Zhan whispered, holding his dear's face in his hands, delighted at the fetching blush adorning his Wei Ying's face and the joy dancing in those pretty, pretty silver eyes.

"I am surrendering my heart in your care, Lan Zhan. Take responsibility." Wei Ying whispered shyly, not wanting to shatter the softness of this moment, not wanting to break this delicate web of love weaving between their souls, binding them once again with their devotion.

“You humble me, Wei Ying.” Lan Zhan answered, his thumbs tracing the alluring red of his beloved's skin as the red of the sunset lost its shine in front of such beauty.

Later, they would rediscover their bodies, their passion rekindled. Moonlight from the window would dance across their naked skin as they would lose themselves in each other, in their messy kisses, in drawing paintings on their bodies with their tongue, in their teeth leaving marks of their ardour everywhere, in Wei Ying goading his Lan Zhan, pushing against his husband's restrain, in Lan Zhan retaliating with his bruising grips and punishing pace as he would fuck into his Wei Ying, again and again, in every moan, every scream, every sigh, creating a melody of their own lovemaking, in finding their release again and again, and each time more passionate than the last.

Much later, the room would be filled with the smell of sex and soothing presence of their love, with a gentle breeze cooling down their heated desire, with the sweat on their bodies shining like pearls, with Wei Ying sleeping peacefully after a long time, held in his lover's arm, with Lan Zhan sleeping contentedly now that he could finally embrace his love.

But, for now, at that very evening, as the birds and trees as witness, the time stood still when the gold met silver.

—

It was late in the morning when Wei Ying woke up. He was already washed and cleaned after their hours of lovemaking. A set of new robes, full five layers of them in varying shades of reds and blacks, were placed on the stand next to the bed, no doubt a gift from his love. He touched the silks gently, marvelling at their softness. He shivered when their feather-light touch kissed his naked skin. He could still feel the aches and twinges on this body, his core working hard to bring his body back to normal. But he decided to keep the marks his husband left on him, as a celebration of his husband's possession and proclamation.

There was food on the side table, kept warm with heating talismans and he enjoyed them with relish, as ravenous as he was after yesterday's activities. His Lan Zhan was merciless the previous night and Wei Ying suffered for it. And yet, what a sensual delight it was! By the end of this week how whole body would be loose and covered with bites and bruises, Wei Ying was sure.

Lan Zhan entered the room by the time Wei Ying finished his breakfast. As soon as he entered, he found himself arms full of his husband with complaints ready on his lips. He sat next to the table, placing his husband gently on his lap.

“How can you leave your Wei Ying alone like this? After using him for the whole night for your pleasure. You went on and on yesterday, er-ge ge. How can you treat your delicate husband so thoroughly? What do you have to say for yourself, huh?” Wei Ying pouted, squirming in Lan Zhan’s lap.

“Wei Ying enjoyed his husband’s fucking last night.” Lan Zhan replied, tightening his arms around Wei Ying.

“H-how can you say this, Lan Zhan? That too with such a straight face! Shameless!” Wei Ying scolded.

“If I am shameless, Wei Ying made me so.” Lan Zhan caressed Wei Ying’s back.

“Ha! Now you have learnt to make me speechless” Wei Ying said as he leaned on his beloved’s chest.

“Mn.”

“You are enjoying this, aren’t you, Hanguang-Jun? You love to tease your Wei Ying, I know you very well.”

“Mn.”

“You are so mean to your Wei Ying”, Wei Ying pouted, “but me rest in your arms a bit, love. You have tired me thoroughly yesterday.” Wei Ying closed his eyes, listening to the thump of his husband’s heart, as his heart was soothed with the calm and peace only Lan Zhan could bring.

They rested like that, soaked in each other's presence, content with themselves and with the world. They spent the whole day, enjoying each other's company, walking near the river at the edge of the town, buying odd trinkets in a small but lively market.

And the next day, they planned. They only had one week to complete their task, and one year to execute an important mission, before the classes at Gusu, and both were not easy.

Five

Chapter Summary

A fight and a sword!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Encounter with an old enemy

It took them half a day to find the cave of Xuanwu. It had been a very long time, many decades, since Wei Ying and Lan Zhan had seen this region and details of it were quite murky. They had already made plans and ample preparations to defeat the beast, Xuanwu. This time they were at their full power. They were not hungry or stressed. Their survival was not at stake. And most importantly, they had their spiritual weapons and a lot of experience.

They decided to make a camp outside the cave to rest during the day and then hunt at night. They were wearing non-descriptive clothes. They did not want to alert the Wens about the beast. To the outsiders, they looked like a couple of farming boys. Lan Zhan's forehead ribbon was safely tied on Wei Ying's arms with his sleeves covering the whole thing.

"Wei Ying, please keep it safe for me" Lan Zhan had said and Wei Ying's romantic heart could not take such provocation. He had swooned into his husband's arms and proceeded to kiss all over Lan Zhan's face, tiny, soft, bunny kisses and then his husband could not stand for such provocation which led to their other, everyday activities, and if they were late by a few hours, only they knew. Maybe the innkeeper knew too, for he did supply hot water for bathing in the middle of the day.

Once the morning came, Wei Ying made sure to use one of his shields to cover the entire area, including the cave. No matter what happened inside, no sound or any other spiritual fluctuations could escape to the outside world.

It took less time than the last timeline to kill the beast.

As soon as they entered the cave, Wei Ying played ChenQing. A horrifying melody which called for its junior brother, a sword full of resentment to serve its new master. The sword did not submit easily. Protected by the beast, it fought for control and only surrendered after a fierce battle of wills. The resentment sword was not a match for the grandmaster of the mo dao himself. It flew into the waiting hands of Wei Ying, ready to serve and protect its master. This time, there would be no tiger tally which would answer the call of anyone. This time, the sword had found its master and would only do his bidding.

As soon as the sword was awakened and called by Yiling Laozu, the beast woke up with anger. Its slumber was disturbed by the disturbance in the resentment. Expecting the outcome, Wei Ying and Lan Zhan got ready for the upcoming battle, Lan Zhan with his guqin chords and Wei Ying, with his flute.

The majestic Xuanwu rose above the water. The sword, in a hurry to reach its master, had left a deep cut in the beast's throat, which of course was within Wei Ying's plan. Lan Zhan quickly used his guqin strings for Chord Assassination technique to choke the beast.

Wei Ying continued to play ChenQing, urging the yin energy to enter the body of the beast and ravage the inner organs. The beast thrashed around as it was attacked both from the outside and inside. The water churned and boiled with the energy it released. The tail of the creature hit the ceiling of the cave and the debris fell down on both Wei Ying and Lan Zhan. But they did not take attention from the beast even a bit. It was important that they continued with their assault and even a tiny bit of the loss of concentration would be fatal. Ominous qi from the beast tried to attack the pair of cultivators. But with the talisman shields placed on their robes, it did not touch them at all. For a long time the roar of the beast reverberated through the cave which would have made other cultivators die of fright, but for Yiling Laozu and Hanguang-Jun, a pair of husbands who have seen so much of the world and have had experience a normal cultivator never could imagine, this was nothing.

It took a bit over three hours for the beast to finally lay dead.

Even with all the advantages they had this time, killing such a divine beast in their younger bodies was still exhausting. But the work was not done yet. They had to make sure to hide the body and hide the traces of their fight. They used their combined seals to hide the body of Xuanwu inside the water. The body would never rise to the top, forever laid to rest.

Wei Ying and Lan Zhan played Cleansing to clear all resentment energy inside the cave. They also played Eliminate, a new melody they had developed in their last life, to clear out all the traces of spiritual energy along with all the energy dissipated in the battle. Once out of the cave, they reactivated the shield they had earlier used to hide the cave. This way no one would be able to break this shield and no one would know that there was a battle here.

They also sealed the entrance of the cave and only Lan Zhan or Wei Ying would be able to open it. This would be useful during the indoctrination camp. When the sect heirs and other disciples are dragged into this cave, because there was no beast, the threat level would be very minimal and they could then fight with the Wen Chao and Wen Zhuliu easily.

Soon, they were back at their camping site.

“That was well done, don’t you think, Lan Zhan?” Wei Ying asked. Not getting an answer from his husband, Wei Ying looked back at Lan Zhan, and trembled at the sight. There was a hunger in his eyes as Lan Zhan looked at Wei Ying, as if he would devour him to the bones, as if he would eat him up and hide him in his belly. *Battle frenzy*, Wei Ying thought as he was roughly pinned against a tree by his Lan Zhan.

After that, it was a battle between tongue and teeth. There was a wildness to their kisses, a certain madness with which they tore each other's clothes, a reckless abandon as they rutted each other like animals. There was no finesse, no sophistication in their actions. This was no lovemaking, but a raw fucking to find their release. And it was over as quickly as it started. For a while there was only harsh breathing as they cooled down. With the dirt from their battle, a lingering air of yin and yang energies on the surface of their skin, their spent smeared across their torso, they looked like wild savages instead of the cultivators they are.

Wei Ying started laughing with abandon when he took note of their state. “So impatient, er-ge ge. Who would believe their sophisticated Second Jade of Lan would mate like an animal in heat. What do you have to say for yourself, huh?”

“Wei Ying”.

“There there, my Lan Zhan. Your secret is safe with me. Do not pout, Lan er-ge ge.” Wei Ying tickled his husband’s chin.

Soon, they took a bath in a nearby river and ate dinner with dry rations. They were too tired to cook a proper dinner. The fight and their subsequent activities had depleted their core. Wei Ying then activated a small shield to protect their campsite, so that they both could sleep instead of one keeping a watch while the other slept.

As they laid on their bed rolls, Wei Ying rested his head on Lan Zhan’s chest and his husband’s arms naturally encircling his waist, holding him close, “Have you thought about the name?” Lan Zhan asked.

“Fenghuang, my sword will be called Fenghuang, phoenix rising from the ashes, just like my life.” Wei Ying replied. He could feel his sword answering the call of its name with excitement. In the next few months, Wei Ying would spend time to tame the resentment within the sword and place arrays to hide the yin energy. Soon, the sword would be able to channel both yin and the yang energies and no one would associate this sword with Xuanwu’s cave.

“Good name.” Lan Zhan replied.

“Hmm...er-ge ge...I am sleepy....” Wei Ying yawned, placed a kiss on Lan Zhan’s chest, and slept contently.

“Good night”

“Good night” Wei Ying murmured, already half asleep.

They were at their full capacity by morning and after a hearty breakfast, they left for the Dafan Wen village. They had another important task to complete there, after all.

Chapter End Notes

Next, my favourite sister Wen Qing!

Six

Chapter Summary

Yiling Siblings!!!

Chapter Notes

I was quite busy last two days and could not reply to your beautiful messages. I will do it soon. Meanwhile, hopefully you will enjoy this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Meeting an old acquaintance

Wen Qing woke up to the shouts of the children playing nearby her window. She should probably get up and go about her day. But she felt so comfortable, so peaceful after a long time, she loathed leaving the warmth of her blankets. She did not know when she had slept so well. And all she wanted to do was to stretch like a lazy cat and go back to sleep.

“A-jie, are you awake?” her brother called out from outside. Would he go away if she does not answer him? But Wen Ning did not leave as she hoped. “There are two young people who want to meet you, a-jie. They claim to be cultivators.” he continued.

“Oh!” She exclaimed. Was it all a coincidence or was it planned that they happen to come here just as she came back from the Nightless city to visit her family? She just hoped that this is not another plan of her uncle to make her submit to him. As twisted as her uncle was, family loyalty and filial piety was demanded of her. And to just not offer that would be the doom of her family. She could already see the seeds of her uncle’s ambition. She was not an idiot. She knew there would be a war in the next few years, she had seen the signs. Her uncle was slowly pushing the boundaries, encroaching on territories belonging to others, slowly testing the water, so to speak. Right now all the great sects have ignored these signs and have kept quite out of selfish reasons. But soon, they would push back, once the clutches of her uncles reach their great sects and their own interests are compromised. They would not

ignore the problem then, like how these great sects are ignoring what is happening to minor clans.

With a sigh, she pushed back all her gloomy thoughts and got ready to meet her guests. An instinct told her that her life and destiny will change after today.

—

Wen Qing observed her guests as one of them talked to her brother constantly. The silent one looked calm and collected. He looked like a person with hidden strength and depth. His golden eyes reflected a steadiness in character. His shoulders looked dependable. His companion on the other hand was restless in spirit, very charming. His silver eyes were filled with mischief and there was intelligence too. She could not tell where they were from, for they both wore clothes that did not belong to any sects or region. And they carried no swords, even though they introduced themselves as cultivators. There was a black flute stuck in the belt of the man with silver eyes. On the outer side they looked like a pair of farmers.

But Wen Qing would not make the mistake of underestimating these two. She had honed her instincts and survival skills under the tyranny of her uncle and she knew without a doubt that these two are deadly. Contradictory to their young age, power radiated off of them, barely hidden beneath the surface, coiled to strike at a moment's notice, at the first sign of danger, to kill, to protect, to defend. No, these were not some random boys lost in the woods. These two were very powerful people and she had every reason to be wary.

“Ah! Greetings Wen-guniang.” The silver eyes, no, the person who introduced himself as Wei Wuxian bowed. His companion offered his bows as well, although he did not speak. Wen Qing offered her own bows and motioned her hands to make them sit back.

“To what do I owe the pleasure of your company? Are you perhaps in need of any healing services?” she asked.

“No, Wen-guniang. But we do have something important to discuss with you and your brother. It is a bit of a secret and I do not want others to know what we discussed today. Rest assured, we do not mean to harm you or your family. Please trust us this once” Wei Wuxian said.

Wen Qing did not know what made her agree with these two people. She had met them just that morning. But instinct guided her to take them to her room with her brother, to listen to what they had to say, to agree to perform Empathy of all things, on both her and her brother. She somehow knew that whatever was happening was important and life changing.

“This is a shield I created. It will stop others from listening to what we are talking about and also stops others from attacking us. Please sit within two metres radius.” Wei Wuxian explained.

Wei Wuxian had come up with a method to simultaneously perform Empathy on both her and her brother. His companion, Lan Wangji - and she did not know what the Second Jade of Lan doing with this random rouge cultivator - acted as an anchor to bring them back, his guqin ready.

What followed was a tragic story of one person standing with justice and against the whole world, a tale of a brother's golden sacrifice, a story of a war and its bloody aftermath, a desperate sacrifice of a sister and her brother to save her innocent family including her new brother, a story of a so called brother's betrayal and him leading the entire cultivation world to slaughter the innocents, her own family's last ditch effort and the brutal death of her brother, Wei Wuxian in the end. She could feel the phantom pain of the fire as it burned her flesh and destroyed her body.

But the story did not end there. Her brother by blood and brother of her heart met again. It was a story of her sweet Wen Ning, a sentient fierce corpse held captive for 13 years, of the resurrection of their saviour, of conspiracies and betrayals that ran more than a decade in the making. There was also love, unconditional and freely offered between the man of light and the man who was reviled as evil by the whole world. And it ended with a small spark of hope for the future and humanity, a tiny child who grew up to be an excellent man, a good man, just like his two fathers.

There was a sound of guqin which pulled them back to the present in the end. There were tears in her eyes. She could see Wen Ning crying beside her. Never once did she doubt if this could be lies. Given what she knew of her uncle and the cultivation sects, everything that happened was a forgone conclusion, a natural order of things, a future she could expect.

“What do you plan to do now, Wei Wuxian?” She asked fiercely. She would not lose him to the war and politics that would come after, a second time. Once was more than enough.

“Aiya, you are still as scary as ever, little Wen Qing.” Wei Wuxian laughed as he leaned on his husband.

“I am older than you.” She replied dryly.

“No, little Wen Qing. You do realize that we were already grandfathers by the time we came back?” Wei Wuxian patted her head like a grandfather he claimed to be.

“Whatever!” She said, “Now what?”

“There is a valley...” Wei Wuxian started cautiously, “You and your family can move there. In fact anyone who wants to leave can move there. It is quite far from the cultivation worlds, almost at the border and very close to the imperial power. The war will not touch that place. But...” he hesitated a bit.

“What else? Spill it out.” Wen Qing urged.

“You will have to change your surnames. You cannot be Wens anymore, it is not safe, even if it is that far. I think living is more important than your name, anyway.” Wei Wuxian replied, a little unsure if she would agree to this.

But after what she had seen in Empathy, changing names were the least of her worries. She agreed to his suggestions immediately.

“Great. Good. Good. Good.” Wei Wuxian practically bounced in his seat.

“How do we do it? My uncle is expecting me to go back in two days.” Wen Qing asked.

“When will you come back next?” Wuxian asked in reply.

“A-jie will come back in two months.” Wen Ning answered, “there is a family wedding. A cousin of mine is getting married.”

“Wen Yuan’s parent’s, actually.” Wen Qing added. She knew what this would imply, if their plan was successful and she was not without pity to these two fathers. She left the room with Wen Ning to give them some privacy.

“Oh!” Wei Ying looked at his husband with misty eyes. He leaned on Lan Zhan’s side seeking comfort and assurance. “Wei Ying”, Lan Zhan held him by his shoulders.

“I know, my love. This is better. This is good. We both know how it feels to grow up without parents. A child growing up with his loving parents, without the tragedies of the war and turmoil after, what else can we hope for our radish! He always wanted five siblings. Maybe this time, he would get to have them.”, Wei Ying tucked his face into Lan Zhan’s neck and sniffed the comforting perfume of sandalwood.

“Mn. We will visit. After.” Lan Zhan consoled his love.

“Yes. Yes. Hanguang-Jun, I will not say thank you. But you are so good to this Wei Ying”.

“Mn.”

After a while, the pair of siblings came back with tea and snacks for the pair of husbands. Wen Qing saw that Wei Wuxian was smiling with his habitual cheer and she hoped Lan Wangji had recovered too, but she could never tell, for his face always looked the same.

After sipping some calming tea, they went back to their conversation about the wedding.

“This would work perfectly. What do you think, Lan Zhan?” Wei Ying asked his lover.

“Mn. Will give Wei Ying time to prepare” Lan Zhan replied.

“What are you talking about? What preparation?” Wen Qing asked. Now that she knew everything, she was a bit impatient to get to the plan.

“Why, I need to prepare to kill all of you!” Wei Wuxian answered with a grin.

“Wei Wuxian! Speak properly or else...” Wen Qing showed her needles threateningly.

“Lan Zhan, save your Wei Ying....” he hopped onto his husband’s lap.

“Mn. Will protect Wei Ying.” Lan Zhan held him close.

“Wei Wuxian! You said you were a grandfather. But look at you! Ha!” Wen Qing scolded and Wei Ying put his tongue out to tease her more, “Xianxian is three years old! Isn’t it, er-gege?” Wei Ying snuggled close to Lan Zhan.

“Mn. And very cute.” Lan Zhan patted Wei Ying’s head and Wei Ying cheeks filled with red as he spluttered, “*Lan Zhan!*”.

Wen Ning blushed furiously and Wen Qing was rendered speechless with this shameless display of dog food.

“Aww...Wen Ning, look at you blushing so much. Should we find a partner for you?” Wei Ying pinched Wen Ning’s cheek.

“Wei Wuxian!” Wen Qing scolded.

“Okay okay. Let’s get serious now. I will tease Wen Ning later.” Wei Ying replied, “Here is what you can do. In the next two months contact all your family members scattered throughout. Also talk to your people in this village. Make sure whoever wants to move to the new place attends the wedding. That would be the perfect cover.” Wei Ying started explaining his plans.

“Cover for what?” Wen Ning asked.

“We will immediately leave once the wedding is over.” Wei Ying said.

“But how will we keep this secret from my uncle?” Wen Qing asked.

“For that, you need to let me know the details of your family members like gender, age, body build etc.” Wei Ying replied.

“And?”

“I will find fierce corpses fairly similar to your people. Once you leave this village, I will set up a huge spirit lure array. That would bring a lot of monsters present within a 20 kilometre radius. And they would fight these corpses and tear them into pieces. That way, to everyone else it would look like there was a huge invasion of demons and monsters and they managed to kill all the people in the village. Your uncle will not be able to suspect anything. Trust me.” Wei Ying answered.

“This could work. But, what about the supplies? If we are to set up this, we cannot take anything from our homes, lest someone gets suspicious.” Wen Qing asked worriedly.

“Yes. Leave the transport and supplies to me. I will collect them in the next two months into Qiankun bags. I am quite rich this time, you know.” Wei Ying replied, “and also, I will send some non-descriptive clothes for you all. You will have to pretend that you are a caravan of merchants.”

“This is a good plan.” Wen Qing said, “we will do as you said”.

In the next two days they rehashed their plan again and again.

Afterwards, Wen Qing would have to leave for the Nightless city in the next two days. She would then secretly correspond with her family and try to convince all of her family to defect. Because the war had not yet started, her uncle's hold on her family was not much. Her family was not closely monitored as of now. This would be the perfect time to walk away.

Wei Wuxian meanwhile would work on his side of things. He would come back in time for the wedding. Once the whole family has left for the distant land, he would call on every demon and wild beasts nearby and make them fight these fierce corpses. To the outsiders it would look like the whole village, the whole Dafan Wen family who were there to attend the wedding died tragically in an invasion of demons. There would be no more Dafan Wens after that day.

Wei Wuxian would then erase the traces of their travel along the way, before he would join them. He would accompany them to show the valley and also as a protection all through the journey.

But for now, they stayed in the Dafan village for a couple of days. They first sent Wen Qing to the Nightless City. She was equipped with secret communication devices that Wei Wuxian had given her. Once she left, Wei Wuxian supplied a few protective talismans and shields to Wen Ning, along with the communication devices. After that, Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji left the village.

At the outskirts of the village, the pair of husbands parted ways as a temporary separation. Wei Wuxian said a tearful goodbye to his husband and left to fulfil his part of the plan. Lan Wangji went back to Gusu.

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After two months, everything went exactly as they had planned and the Dafan Wens disappeared from the cultivation world.

They travelled on smaller and roundabout paths, avoiding the main roads. They hunted on the way for fresh food. Couple of them would sneak into the town to buy rations as and when required. Wei Wuxian had made a considerable amount of money selling his compasses and devices through the Caiyi merchant, Li Bai Yi. And Wen Qing as the niece of Wen Ruohan had a small fortune in her name as well. They used that money to fund this trip and even after spending a lot, they would still be left with a lot of money to establish themselves. It took all of them more than six months to travel on carriages to the valley.

The valley was a beautiful place, a veritable paradise compared to bleak Qishan Wen. They settled themselves in those uncharted lands, the closest town was two weeks away on a carriage. It was safe and hidden. They would form a sect concentrating on healing arts, wine making, farming, and carpentry.

Wei Wuxian stayed with them for a month, placing hidden wards and shields to safeguard the family. There was a feast on the last day of his stay where they unanimously decided that they would belong to the Wei sect and they would be named after Wei from then onwards.

Chapter End Notes

See you guys at Gusu next.

Seven

Chapter Summary

Gusu times!

I think this is the longest chapter so far.

Chapter Notes

Could not resist updating the chapter today. I had to. Because this is everyone's favourite arc, including mine.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Meeting at Cloud Recesses

Dear Hanguang-Jun,

I will reach Caiyi tomorrow. And I would reach your gates the morning of the day after. I hope I get to see your pretty, pretty face the first thing, my love. I would be a very demanding spouse, make no mistake. You have spoiled me so much that I have become greedy for your attention, your pampering, your body, your heart, I want everything.

I am eagerly waiting for our reunion, darling.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Wangji carefully stored his husband's message in a jar, hidden away secretly under the footboard. He had missed his husband a lot in the last 10 years. One week of reunion was not enough to quench his thirst. So, he waited again to meet his beloved.

When he came back to the past, he was already kneeling outside his mother's cottage, waiting for her to open the door, but unfortunately he was too late to save his mother. Soon, his brother and uncle had come to take him back. He had felt very alone at that moment. However, he knew his husband would be with him soon for they both were inside the array when he was sent back to the past. So, he waited and waited. He trained to build his golden core as soon as possible. And finally he received a letter from Wei Ying, and he could rest his mind.

Now, he got to see his husband again and he could not wait to have him in his house, no, their house, their Jingshi again. He was filled with so much joy and the anticipation of meeting his precious, that it leaked into his surroundings. Even his brother and uncle noticed and commented on it during their evening tea.

"Wangji, you seemed happy", Lan Qiren said, taking a sip of the light jasmine tea Wangji had purchased in Caiyi town.

"Mn."

"Is it about the young cultivator you mentioned last time?" Lan Xichen asked.

"Mn. Wei Ying will be arriving the day after tomorrow." Wangji replied.

"He must be the same as his mother. Always mischievous with a blatant disregard for rules. You said he is a rogue cultivator. Then his education must be lacking and will not be comparable to all the sect heirs. Wangji, I do not think he would be a good addition. You should associate with him less." Lan Qiren commented.

Sudden indignation and anger at his uncle did not surprise Lan Wangji. In the last timeline, Wei Ying was left vulnerable throughout his life and was left in a very precarious position because of his sect and his so-called family. He was not adopted, he was not part of the main family, the gentry. He was the head disciple, but was offered no respect or dignity to his position. Most importantly, he was not offered even a bare minimum of protection from his sect - that every disciple of every sect enjoyed - from sect heir Jiang Wanyin and the whole of the Jiangs. That left Wei Ying so vulnerable to the outside world. Just like his uncle found it very easy to pick on Wei Ying with his prejudices and just like how the whole of the cultivation world chose to attack Wei Ying. No one was there to speak up for him. Although Wei Ying was mischievous, his uncle ignored their own rules and found it acceptable to treat Wei Ying the way he did.

Wangji loved his family, his brother, and his uncle. There was no doubt about it. But he was not unaware of their flaws. He could never forget the way Lan Xichen had trusted his precious a-Yao over his own brother. Wangji's affection must have twisted his perception, he was told. But no one understood that Wangji's affection for Wei Ying gave him clarity, showed him the righteous path he was supposed to walk on. Instead, it was the affection towards Meng Yao that coloured Lan Xichen's perception.

"He cannot help it, Wangji. His status and position in his father's sect makes him vulnerable. I have to help him and I trust him so. After all, he did save me once", Lan Xichen would say. As though Wei Ying had not saved Wangji. As though Wei Ying's position did not leave him vulnerable too. No, it was the way Meng Yao behaved towards his brother, as if he needed Lan Xichen's protection, as if he is pitiable. He fed into the ego of Lan Xichen. Meng Yao made Lan Xichen feel benevolent and kind, made him puffed up with his own importance, made him feel good about himself, "Look, I am so helping and kind towards the downtrodden. Look how kind I am. Look how I uplifted the Lan rules."

Wei Ying would never do that. He would never make himself small as expected of his station. No. Wei Ying would show the ugly truths and force you to look in the mirror and he would demand that you do the right thing as one should. He would not make you feel good about yourself and that was the reason for his downfall.

This time Wangji would make sure his uncle and his brother treat Wei Ying fairly. Although he was too late to save his mother, and because he loved his uncle and brother, he would try to make sure they are told when they are wrong.

"Uncle, do not have preconceived notions, do not bad mouth the dead, do not assume, do not look down on people because of their status." Lan Wangji said.

“Wangji!” Lan Xichen exclaimed, “Do not disrespect your uncle”.

“Wangji did not mean any disrespect. But, we should follow our own rules. Otherwise, how can we expect others to follow them?” Lan Wangji replied.

For some time, there was a tense silence as they sipped their tea.

“Wangji, you are right. I have erred and I will strive to correct it. I will keep an open mind” Lan Qiren sighed in the end.

“Thank you, uncle”. Lan Wangji bowed to his uncle.

“Tell me about your Wei Wuxian, Wangji.” Lan Xichen asked. He had the air of an elder brother teasing his younger sibling and having fun with it. But having spent all his life being teased by his husband, his brother’s attempt did not phase him at all.

“Wei Ying is very kind and generous.. Very intelligent too. A bit mischievous, but never malicious. “ Lan Wangji knew that outsiders may not notice it, but his brother and uncle would know how besotted he sounded.

“Oh! This Wei Ying must be very close to you.” Lan Xichen said.

“Mn. Wei Ying is very important to me” Lan Wangji agreed and that was the end of the conversation.

—

Lan Zhan waited at the gate to welcome his husband. And there he was. More beautiful than the last he had seen.

“Wei Ying”, his heart soared at the sight of his beloved. Seeing the wide grin his husband aimed at him made him feel the warmth of sunshine on a cold winter morning. Desire curled around him as Wangji noted that his Wei Ying was wearing one of the robes he had purchased for him. He could not wait until he got to remove those robes with his own hands and then sink into his husband's heat, again and again.

One week of his husband's company last time was not nearly enough. It was never enough. Wangji was always insatiable when it comes to his Wei Ying, greedy even. Although it goes against the Lan rules, to be so passionate, to be filled with so much want, to be so excess in his regard, nothing would stop Wangji from admiring his love. He would always want his beloved under him, screaming and writhing in ecstasy and would still take everything Wangji had to give and give until Wangji tasted his tears. He would always want his darling on his lap, find peace and serenity in the shared companionship. He would always want and need his husband.

Something of his passion must have shown in his face that there was a pretty blush across his beloved's cheeks. “Shameless!” Wei Ying muttered as came near. As a young man, on the cusp of adulthood, Wei Ying looked *so* cute, *so* pretty, that Wangji's heart and soul felt too small to contain everything he felt for his love.

“Come. Uncle and brother are waiting to meet you.” Lan Zhan held Wei Ying's wrist briefly and released it immediately. At this moment, Lan Zhan could only be content with this small touch, hidden under his sleeves.

“Later, my love. You can have your Wei Ying very soon.” his husband whispered to Lan Zhan.

“Mark your words.” Lan Zhan murmured back. He hummed in satisfaction as he could feel the hitch in his husband's breath.

—

Wei Ying looked gorgeous in the black and red silk robes, as he stood beside him to greet his uncle and brother, a model of picture perfect gentleman.

“Wei Wuxian, son of Wei Changze and Cangse Sanren, greets Lan-lao shi and Zewu-Jun ”. Wei Wuxian executed a perfect bow to Lan Qiren and Lan Xichen.

“Greetings, Wei-Sanren.” Lan Xichen bows back and offers him a seat. “I hope your travels were easy and safe.”

“Yes, Zewu-Jun. It was very easy. And your Caiyi town is really beautiful. Of course, nothing compares to the beauty of our Second Jade of Lan.” Wei Ying replied. Lan Zhan could feel his ears turn red. He was filled with affection, fondness, and embarrassment, all at once much to the amusement of his brother.

“Wei Wuxian, tell me your story. It was very late by the time news of your parent’s demise reached Cloud Recesses. In fact, it was the Sect leader Jiang Fengmian who wrote to us about this and mentioned that he was looking for you. Obviously he did not manage to find you even after searching for a couple of years.” Lan Qiren asked.

“Of course, Lan- Lao shi. I stayed in Yiling for a couple of years. I lived on the streets. There were some kind people who took care of an orphan child. And there were some not so pleasant people too. A travelling rogue cultivator took pity on me and took me with him for a few years. I learnt the basic cultivation practices from him. Later, I travelled across the land, met many rogue cultivators and I got to learn from many of them. I met Lan Zhan a few months back during a night hunt and we immediately became fast friends. He graciously invited me to attend the lectures this year and I accepted.” Wei Ying replied.

“Wangji tells me that you are a competent cultivator, his equal even”, Lan Qiren asked. He looked very sceptical.

“Mn. Wei Ying is very powerful.” Lan Wangji answered.

“Uncle, why not let them spar to assess? Wei Wuxian, our uncle just wants to know in which class you should be placed. Wangji and other sect heirs would attend the advanced class.” Lan Xichen addressed both his uncle and Wei Wuxian.

“I understand, Zewu-Jun.” Wei Ying replied.

“Indeed. You rest from your travels this morning. Lan Wangji will show you the guest quarters. We will test you with your knowledge in the afternoon. And you will spar with Wangji in the evening to test your skills with the sword.” With that Lan Qiren dismissed his nephews and Wei Wuxian.

—

The evening was perfect for a sparring match. Lan Zhan was anticipating fighting with his husband. Wei Ying always looked so beautiful. But Wei Ying in his element - showcasing his prodigious skills, be it sword fighting or bending the large amount of yin energy to his will - was breathtaking and Lan Zhan could not wait to see the glorious form of his husband, gracious lines of his visage, his lithe, panther-like body, his sharp, fiery eyes burning with sharp focus, everything about his husband when he fights called to the primal part of Lan Zhan’s soul.

Lan Xichen joined his brother as he was walking towards the arena.

“Uncle was very impressed by your Wei Wuxian, Wangji. They had a huge discussion on various topics after the test. They also got into an argument it seems. Uncle was said to be angry with Wei Wuxian, but clearly he was very eager to resume their discussion tomorrow, or so I am told.” Lan Xichen’s eyes twinkled as he shared this with his brother. Lan Wangji could see his brother very much enjoying the whole affair.

“Wei Ying is brilliant.” Lan Zhan praised. He was so proud of Wei Ying. Excessive pride was forbidden. But nothing was excessive when it came to his husband.

“I am looking forward to this year’s class then.” Lan Xichen replied.

“Lan Zhan. Lan Zhan. Are you excited? I am“, Wei Ying waved his hands from the arena beaming at Lan Zhan.

“Mn”.

“Let’s start then”, Lan Qiren ordered.

The fight was exhilarating. For Lan Zhan, it was as much a foreplay as it was a fight. He was sure Wei Ying felt the same, for he could see his husband’s eyes flash with immense heat and want. His blood boiled with answering passion and lust ran inside his veins as Lan Zhan parried strike after strike from his husband.

Wei Ying fought dirty. Lan Zhan fought steadily as a mountain when Wei Ying twirled around him as a winding river. He was calm against the storm that Wei Ying raised with his clever and swift sword play. The fight went on for hours until it ended in a draw. Lan Zhan and Wei Ying took away their swords and bowed to each other. As they looked up, their eyes met and they could see the need reflecting in each other’s eyes. Lan Zhan barely controlled himself from dragging Wei Ying to the ground and fuck him until he cried that very moment, others be damned. But no, Wei Ying in the throes of his passion was only for Wangji to see. No one else could see that side of his husband. He carefully banked the embers of his desires under his skin. Even then, he could not stop himself from holding his love’s wrist tightly before releasing it reluctantly. Lan Zhan could see his husband slightly leaning towards him, as if he was ready to yield, ready to surrender and he almost snarled at the others present at the arena, no one should see Wei Ying like this.

As if sensing some tension in the air, Lan Xichen applauded Wei Wuxian to divert the attention. “That was some skill Wei-Sanren. You are truly a prodigy.”

“Thank you, Zewu-Jun. But your brother is no less.” Wei Ying beamed at Lan Zhan.

“You have got a fine sword, Wuxian. What is it called?” Lan Xichen asked.

“Ah, yes. I found this sword in a fortuitous encounter and it immediately recognised me as its master. I have named it “Fenghuang”, a phoenix that rose from ashes, just like how I survived the streets.” Wei Wuxian answered.

“It is a very good name for a very good sword, Wuxian. I am impressed.” Lan Xichen replied.

“Enough chit chat. Wei Wuxian, you can attend the advanced class with Wangji. It will start the day after tomorrow. Make sure you follow the rules.” Lan Qiren ended the evening session.

“Of course, Lan-Lao shi”, Wei Ying bowed to him and left towards his guest quarters. As he passed Lan Zhan, he whispered “Later, husband.” Wei Ying glided his finger at the back of Lan Zhan’s hand under the sleeves, “Think about the ways you can have your husband tonight”.

Lan Zhan was helplessly seduced.

—

Lan Wangji waited for his husband at Jingshi. He did indeed think about the ways he could have his husband that night. That was all he could think of when he had his dinner, when he said goodbyes to his brother and uncle, when he placed silencing talismans all across the room, when he readied their bed. He was already half-hard with anticipation, like a hunter waiting for his prey.

He did not have to wait for long for Wei Ying to jump inside the window. “You are so cunning, er-ge ge. You assigned me the guest room closest to Jingshi so that it will be easier to sneak around. I am sure you planned for me to stay alone in that room. So clever, my love” Wei Ying teased as he closed the window.

Lan Zhan did not wait for Wei Ying to say another word. He pounced on his husband and took his kiss thoroughly.

“ummm...umm..Lan Zhan, slow down, Er- ge ge...wait..” Wei Ying squirmed in his hold.

“No.”

“What do you mean no? You beast. Stop right there...urghh..Lan Zhan...er-ge ge...harder, my love. Go faster...please please....” Wei Ying screamed as Lan Zhan took him apart. Their first time over very quickly. But the night had only begun and it was only after a very long time that Wei Ying slid on his husband’s chest pliant and loose limbed.

“You have ruined me so, Lan Zhan. Er-ge ge, so cruel to your Wei Ying. My body is still young and cannot take on so much.” Wei Ying pouted.

“Wei Ying can and will take what his husband gives.” Lan Zhan tightened his hold on his beloved.

“And you used to call me shameless. Who is the shameless one now, huh?” Wei Ying squirmed as laid completely on top of Lan Zhan’s body.

“ *Wei Ying* .” Lan Zhan could feel his interest stir again and Wei Ying could feel it.

“Aiya! My husband is so insatiable for his Wei Ying! Fine. Fine. I cannot take it anymore. I will keep quiet now.”

“No. Missed hearing Wei Ying’s voice. Almost reminded me of the time when you were not there for 13 years.”

“Oh! My love, my darling, I am here now. Be at ease, beloved.” Wei Ying proceeded to kiss all over Lan Zhan’s face.

“Mn. Sleep.”

“Lan Zhan.”

“Mn.”

“Lan Zhan.”

“I am here”.

“Yes, you always are.”

“Good night, Wei Ying.”

“Good night, Lan Zhan. See you tomorrow.”

“See you tomorrow.”

—

Next day, they spent the whole day in Caiyi. It was nostalgic to see the old city that existed before the war. So much had changed in the city over the decades they had spent in the last timeline. Now, Wei Ying had fun recognising the differences while Lan Zhan indulged him with buying whatever Wei Ying looked at for a second more than necessary.

—

By evening, Wei Ying requested to have tea with the Lans. “Lan Zhan, I want to offer gifts to your family, in return for the classes. It will help you during the war.” He had said.

“Good evening, Wei-Sanren, Wangji” Lan Xichen greeted them when Lan Zhan and Wei Ying entered Hanshi.

“Greetings Lan-Lao Shi, Zewu-Jun.” Wei Ying bowed along with Lan Zhan.

“Sit down, both of you. Wei Wuxian, what is the reason for this meeting?” Lan Qiren asked.

“Lan- Lao shi, please accept my creations as a gift for inviting me for the lecturers this year.” Wei Ying presented his uncle a well crafted wooden box.

“What is it, Wei Wuxian? Please explain.” Lan Xichen asked.

“One is a self-sustaining array which will prevent fire accidents in buildings. One array can cover a building as large as, say, your library. The other is a shield which can withstand a moderate amount of spiritual and resentful energy attacks. It is a huge array that can cover the entire Cloud Recesses. There is a small device attached to it. You only need ten of your disciples to charge it with their spiritual energy every month. You can use this as an additional shield. It will not interfere with your current one. I have included detailed instructions on how to create both of them.” Wei Ying explained.

“This is quite a heavy gift, Wei Ying. If this works, and I am sure it will, then we cannot take it without any payment.” Lan Xichen replied.

“Please, it is a gift freely offered, Zewu-Jun. One, it is a gratitude for allowing me to attend the classes here. Second, you are Lan Zhan’s family. This is his home. Gusu is very important to him. And Lan Zhan is very important to me. I want to help protect his home.” Wei Ying looked at Lan Zhan with so much love that Lan Zhan felt humbled and also elated. To be loved so much is a privilege and Lan Zhan would protect it.

“Protection. Wei Wuxian, you are talking as though there is a threat to our home.” Lan Qiren observed.

“Lan- Lao shi, I have travelled across the lands all these years. I have seen many things. There are so many skirmishes happening across the land. Survival of so many minor sects being threatened. It is only a matter of time that this will get bigger and bigger and the Sun will burn down the world.” Wei Ying replied.

“Lan clan has always advocated peace, Wei Wuxian. I do not believe that there will be a war. We of the Lan clan always believe in prevention rather than a merciless war.” Lan Qiren argued.

“I agree. War is merciless. It is always better to avoid senseless killings. But ignoring the signs would be stupidity.” Wei Ying answered back.

“Wei Wuxian, do not be presumptuous.” Lan Qiren warned.

“Yes. We need not be alarmists, surely. As a great clan, the Lan clan may not even be the target. I am sure we will not be dragged into whatever is happening right now.” Lan Xichen interjected.

“Ignoring the signs is stupidity. Preventing war, striving for peace is admirable, no doubt. But not even preparing for the worst case is foolishness. Ignoring the plights of minor clans and common people is everything against what our rules stand for. Thinking that we will be spared, that we will be invulnerable because we are a great clan is arrogance and misplaced pride.” Lan Wangji was angry.

“Lan Zhan...” Wei Ying leaned towards his husband, offering some comfort.

“Wangji!” Lan Qiren exploded.

“Wangji surely did not mean it, uncle” Lan Xichen tried to pacify.

“I apologise for my unbecoming display of emotion. But, I meant every word I said. Uncle, brother, it is high time we open our eyes and actually follow the rules our ancestors laid

down, every 3000 of the rules, and not just the superficial ones and not just only when it is convenient”. Lan Wangji bowed to his uncle and brother from where he sat.

There were few moments of thoughtful silence.

“Wangji, I have heard what you have said. Let me reflect on it. You too, Xichen. Inaction and compliance is not always the answer. Reflect on it today. Wei Wuxian, Lan sect thanks for your gift and gladly accepts with utmost humbleness. Thank you.” With that Lan Qiren dismissed everyone.

“Yes, uncle”.

“Yes, Lan-Lao shi”.

—

They were silent as they walked and at one point, Lan Zhan and Wei Ying separated from Lan Xichen and went towards Jingshi. Lan Xichen was very contemplative and did not speak much.

Once they were inside Jingshi, Wei Ying hugged his husband tightly. “Xingan, it is okay. I am here. Everything will be fine. Even if nothing is fine, I will be with you throughout.”

“Mn.”

Lan Zhan was still very much agitated.

He had understood the reasons why Wei Ying did not want to fight the war. All these great sects had become so prideful of their own so-called greatness that they had forgotten how to be a true cultivator and their righteous path. All the minor sects followed these major sects blindly, for more resources, for more power. But they too had lost their way. Their aim was to

become a great sect one day rather than helping those in need. In their previous timeline Wei Ying was the only one who understood what being a cultivator means. Lan Zhan had been privileged enough to learn from his beloved and he was eternally grateful to his husband for showing him the truth.

To see his own clan being so ignorant, to see them follow only surface level rules, to see them not follow the rules that really mattered, to see them offer kindness and benevolence only when it was convenient and only when it did not clash with their self-interests, was very hurtful in his last life. Eventually, Lan Zhan had made peace with it.

Lan Zhan lost his temper, to his utmost shame, when he saw them make the same mistakes now. But it doesn't matter. He had his husband with him. After the war, after helping rebuild the sect, after everything, Lan Zhan would give himself to husband. They will roam the land, helping when needed. Wei Ying would probably want to take his donkey, little Apple with them and Lan Zhan would indulge his husband with all his whims and fancies.

Chapter End Notes

Next on the story:

Anyone interested in angry and sour grape? No one? Any one? Let's welcome Jiang Whiny anyway.

Eight

Chapter Summary

One grape juice, served with bitterness and hostility!

Chapter Notes

Poor Xichen, to be shipped with either Jiang Wanyin or Meng Yao, both equally bad and murderers!

This chapter is my refute to that.

I know you all have been waiting for this! Enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Storm in Cloud Recesses

Lan Xichen looked at the current crop of young cultivators sitting in the class as they offered their gifts one by one. There was Jin Zixuan in all his golden glory, Nie Huaisang with his timid self, and Jiang Wanyin with a terrible air of temper.

Then there was Wei Wuxian sitting next to Wangji, the person he was curious the most. He was gracious and well mannered. He was an intelligent and skilled cultivator. Above all, he was a scholar acknowledged by his uncle and that was rare indeed. But what is even rarer is that his brother seemed to be enamoured by his friend. Xichen had always despaired that his brother was very indifferent to people or that he did not like people in general. To see him so close to another person, to be told that he was very important to Wangji was very surprising.

But as he observed further in the last couple of days, Xichen found that his brother had a very protective air about him when stood next to Wei Wuxian, and shocking of all was the possessiveness - and the amount of lust, so much desire, much to his shame - he could see. And Xichen also saw that whatever it was was not one sided. Wei Wuxian, as Xichen had found out, to be very cheerful and of happy disposition. He radiated warmth and comfort. But when he would be with Wangji, he would be iridescent, almost blinding with his sunshine

smiles and joy, an inner radiance that he could never hide. Wei Wuxian always held himself in an assured way while conversing with others. But when he would be with Wangji, his posture would be slightly loose, still very confident, but he would relinquish a bit of his control to his brother, as though he feels safe with Wangji.

His uncle noticed it too but did not comment on it and that in itself was a tactical approval. So, Xichen was curious to see how this relationship would progress. They did have one year to observe and analyse to observe where it goes.

The gift giving ceremony was soon over and the classes would start the next day. Uncle had left the room leaving Lan Xichen to monitor. This was the time for all the sect heirs and important disciples to introduce themselves and mingle with each other. This was supposed to be a training on navigating the political scene and forming connections with other sects in the future.

Xichen saw Wei Wuxian talk to other sect heirs and disciples. Conversations came very easy to him, no doubt due to all the travelling he did. He charmed the other person within a few seconds and they would soon talk as though they have been friends for years instead of meeting only that day. Xichen was amused to see Wangji following Wuxian across the room, with his hand on Wei Wuxian's lower back with an air of propriety and possessiveness. He was glad to see Wangji's regard returned, for Wuxian was at ease, at home with Wangji hovering around him.

After a while, Xichen noticed that Wei Wuxian decidedly avoided talking to the Jiang group, understandably so given the Jiang sect heir's disposition.

It was only a momentary distraction, while Xichen was conversing with the Yao sect heir, that a commotion broke out. The Jiang sect heir had apparently taken Wei Wuxian with disgust.

"So ,you are that rogue cultivator everyone is talking about. Just a son of a servant. I do not see what is so special about you. How dare you stain this room with your presence and attend the classes meant for the gentry! How dare you think you are above the sect heirs! How dare you show your face in front of me after what you did to my family? You are the reason why my parents are fighting all these years. Are you really the son of the servant Wei Changze? People say that you are an illegitimate son. Ha!" Jiang Wanyin sneered, "I will teach you a lesson you will never forget. Do you think of yourself as some hero just because some lowly

people praise you? I will show you what the real skill is. If you have courage, fight with me right now and let everyone decide who is better”, the Jiang sect heir pointed his sword at Wei Wuxian.

Jiang Wanyin’s vitriol was very unpleasant to hear. As far as Xichen knew, Wuxian had never set foot in Yunmeng Jiang and had never met the Jiang family. As he moved towards the conflict area, he could see his brother looked furious, his hands curled around Wei Wuxian’s waist in a protective grip. He had never seen Wangji this angry.

“Jiang-gongzi, I am the son of my parents. They were real people. Do not assign some imaginary ancestry based on some rumours which do not have even a grain of truth. And as far as I know, my father left your sect long back and died a free man. Not that there is anything to be ashamed of being a son of a servant. I have never been to Yunmeng Jiang and I have never even met your family. So, what is it that I have supposedly done? I refuse to accept any false allegation, Jiang-gongzi, Please tread carefully. I will forgive you this time for this is your first offence. I will not be merciful next time. And, oh! I am here with an invitation just as you are. Please be aware that you are in the Lan sect and not at your home. Please conduct yourself as befitting a heir of a great sect and the gentry you claim to be.” Wei Wuxian was calm and serious. Xichen had never seen Wuxian devoid of any hint of a smile. His eyes looked so deadly calm and dangerous that even Xichen felt a hint of fear.

“Ha! A son of a servant should not talk about manners. You are just a rogue cultivator, beneath our notice. I don’t know what the Lan clan was thinking, bringing some random people to mingle with their betters. You should know your place and never set foot inside these halls. Get lost”. Jiang Wanyin was furious, and if not for Wangji and Wuxian moving fast enough, he almost hit Wei Wuxian with his sword.

Lan Xichen was unable to bear the humiliation their esteemed guest was facing in their own home. “Jiang-gongzi, Wei-Sanren is an honoured guest of our family and he is here at our invitation. You have humiliated our guest, in our own home, unprovoked. You drew your weapon and almost attacked a guest in our land. The Lan sect would consider this as a personal affront. Please seize your unpleasant words and your mindless actions if you do not want to escalate into an issue between sects.”

“Indeed, Xichen.” Lan Qiren had entered the room just as the conflict broke out. “Jiang-gongzi, you have broken a number of rules in our grounds and as such it warrants a punishment. Please copy the Rule of conduct and Rule of virtue 50 times within this week and present it to me.”

“How dare you assign punishment...” Before Jiang Wanyin made things worse, his lackeys held him down and took him away. “Forgive us, Lan-lao shi”, they said.

“See that your heir completes his punishment. This is his first warning. If he continues to commit mistakes then I will have to write to his parents.” Lan Qiren sent them away with a wave of hand.

“Well, that happened!” Wei Wuxian exclaimed. “Not that I expected anything different, eh, Lan Zhan?” He said.

“Mn”. Lan Zhan tightened his grip on Wei Ying’s waist.

—

Things settled down after that. But Lan Xichen saw his uncle increasingly being dissatisfied with the Jiang sect heir. He often complained to Xichen about Jiang Wanyin’s appalling lack of manners, his temper tantrums, his childish jealousies, and his blatant classism. Jiang Wanyin was so bitter and irritable, as if there were more poison running in his veins than blood.

Lan Xichen had heard about the glowing references of Jiang Wanyin’s prodigious skills and his intelligence and knowledge, allegedly of course. It was said that him being the head disciple was the testament of how good he was. Although gossip was forbidden in the Lan sect, it was not something you could avoid when you go out. However, this time the gossip seemed to be false, once again proving why gossip should be avoided at all costs.

According to his uncle, Jiang Wanyin was mediocre at best. He did not understand even the basics of theories. And yet, he was arrogant and prideful of his skills. His uncle was very tempted to send him to the junior disciples class so that he could learn everything again. Only the political implications of such an act stopped his uncle from doing so. But even then, the Jiang sect heir broke rules regularly and his shidies who always took the blame for it. Once, they even brought alcohol into their rooms and they were caught. One of the Jiang disciples had taken the blame for it, ready to be punished. But Wangji had made sure that all the perpetrators, including Jiang Wanyin, received their punishments, every time.

Lan Xichen felt that his brother took gleeful pleasure every time Jiang sect heir received his punishments, with Wei Wuxian looking at Wangji fondly, but he was not sure though. The brother he knew would not do it and so, he chalked this up to his imagination due to the headache caused by one Jiang Wanyin.

Over the next couple of months, Lan Xichen saw Wei Wuxian making friends with Jin Zixuan, even calling him the peacock of all things. He saw Wuxian discussing arts and paintings with Nie Huaisang. Xichen saw many of the sect heirs and other disciples drawn into the orbit of Wei Wuxian. He saw everyone avoiding the Jiang sect heir and the Jiang disciples. Xichen could understand their motivation. Who would want to be with an unpleasant person, who was always angry, who was quick to criticise and put down someone in an instant, when the alternative was Wei Wuxian, who always helped when asked, who was always kind, who was always generous with his smiles.

Xichen could see the mounting jealousy and increasing rage against Wei Wuxian, as if a mere rouge cultivator insulted a sect heir of a gentry clan just by being better and more skilled than Jiang Wanyin.

Lan Xichen had heard from many senior Lan disciples that they had witnessed Jiang Wanyin asking to fight with Wei Wuxian all the time and every time Wuxian would turn him down claiming Lan sect rules. And one day finally, in a sword fighting session, Jiang sect heir's wish came true. Unlucky that he was, Xichen was assigned to supervise that class, and he had to close his eyes to save himself from the sheer absurdity of it all.

“Wei Wuxian, I knew you were a coward. You have always refused to fight me all the time. Now you cannot escape from me. My Sandu will show you a hell upon these grounds. Come, fight me!” Jiang Wanyin shouted across the field to Wuxian.

Lan Xichen heard Wuxian sigh heavily next to him and he turned towards Wangji, “Lan Zhan, I will be back soon. Do not miss me, Lan-er ge ge”, he grinned at his brother.

“Finish quickly. Do not play”. Lan Wangji replied.

“You are no fun, er-ge ge” Wei Wuxian pouted, but Lan Wangji only looked at him firmly. “Fine! You win Lan Zhan. But I want a reward.” Wei Wuxian replied, almost leaning on Wangji.

“ *Later* ”, Lan Wangji answered. There was a slight bit of suggestion, a hint of something more in his reply. There was an undercurrent between Wuxian and Wangji, and Lan Xichen felt like an intruder. He felt he should not be there. And to make matters worse, Lan Xichen saw his brother hold Wei Wuxian’s wrist tightly before releasing his hand and there was so much passion and desire in his brother’s eyes, that Xichen positively blushed and moved out of their orbit.

—

The fight did not even last a minute, not even a second. As soon as Wei Wuxian entered the arena, one moment Jiang Wanyin rushed at him with his sword, ready to strike, and in the next moment, Sandu was flying out of his hands with a clever wrist technique by Wuxian.

The silence that followed was very painful.

And then Wei Wuxian, spoke, “Jiang Wanyin, it was not cowardice that I rejected to fight with you. It was my kindness to spare a bit of pride for you. And yet, you insisted that we spar, again and again. Now that we have spared and you have faced the result of it, I hope that you will conduct yourself with dignity befitting your station. Patience and kindness will not last forever. I do hope you will remember this lesson.” There was a hint of steel and uncompromising bearing with which Wei Wuxian spoke. As Wuxian left the arena and came back to Wangji, he was his usually cheerful self, as if what happened before was not of importance to him.

“YOU! How dare you humiliate me! What cheap tricks did you use? I am the son of Violet Spider. There is no way a rogue cultivator can defeat me like this. You must have cheated somehow. Zewu-Jun, I ask you to conduct a thorough investigation. Isn’t “no cheating” one of your rules?” The Jiang sect heir was furious and his face was red with rage.

“Jiang-gongzi, There was no cheating. We all saw what happened. Please accept the result gracefully. I have lost to Wuxian in sword fighting as well. He is very skilled. If you continue

like this, you will be punished again”. Lan Xichen tried to placate the angry man and asked his shidus to take him away.

At the end of the day Lan Xichen was tired and desperately wished for a cure headache and a good sleep at night. He could not wait for this year’s lecturer to get over.

Chapter End Notes

Next: Abyss in the waters and war looming in horizon.

Nine

Chapter Summary

The appearance of an abyss!

Chapter Notes

So, given the response for the last chapter, should we start a matchmaking alliance for Lan Xichen?

I already have a ship in place and this fic is already completed. So, this ship will not change.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Encounter with an abyss

It was two months into the classes that Lan Xichen received the news about water ghouls in the Caiyi lake. His uncle was away at a discussion conference and he had to take a lead on that. He went to find his brother to discuss further actions and found Wei Wuxian next to him with no surprise. Wangji and Wuxian seemed to be attached at the hip all the time. He had never seen Wangji without his hands placed at Wuxian's back or circled around his waist and Lan Xichen had long ago shed the notion that this was just a friendship. He was happy for his brother and was glad that Wuxian blended with his family seamlessly and was well received.

“Wangji, Wuxian, are you busy?” Xichen asked.

“Hello, Zewu-Jun. We are not busy. What is the matter?” Wuxian answered for Wangji as well.

“I have received a report that there are many water ghouls troubling the people of Caiyi. Wangji, I want you to bring a few of the disciples and join me for this expedition. Of course, you are welcome too, Wuxian.” Xichen could not decipher the looks Wangji and Wuxian

exchanged at that. Confused, he continued, “And Su Shi wanted to be a part of this, Wangji. Make sure you bring him.”

“No.” Both Wangji and Wuxian replied at the same time. “Incompetent. Will put others in danger.” Wangji said before Lan Xichen could ask for the reason.

“As you wish Wangji. We will leave in another thirty minutes.” As Lan Xichen made way to his quarters to get ready for the task, he was met with the Jiangs and he had to include Jiang Wanyin to this mission as well. Xichen did not know how to refuse Jiang Wanyin without him taking it as a personal insult.

On the way back, Jin Zixuan asked to be included as well. Lan Xichen was a bit apprehensive about this volatile mix of sect heirs and disciples, but he had no other choice.

After half an hour, everyone gathered near the gate.

“What are you doing here? Ready to show off how good you are, how better you are than all of us?” Jiang Wanyin showed his temper again.

“Jiang-gongzi, Wuxian is here at my request just as you are.” Xichen answered. But that only increased Jiang Wanyin’s rage.

Jiang Wanyin looked at Lan Wangji’s hand placed at Wei Wuxian’s back meaningfully, “Now I see how it is...”, he spoke to Wei Wuxian, “You have spread your legs to the Second Jade of Lan! You damned cutsleeve! No wonder you are being offered such privileges. Zewu-Jun, does your Lan sect accept such immoral behaviours?”

Before Xichen could answer, Wei Wuxian replied.

“Of course I spread my legs to my Lan Zhan, everyday, in fact, and I enjoyed it immensely”, Wei Wuxian looked at Lan Wangji, tilted his head slightly, and asked coquettishly, like the imp that he was, “Er-ge ge, did you enjoy your Wei Ying as well?”

“Mn. Wei Ying was very good.” Lan Wangji replied seriously.

“I see that the esteemed Second Jade of Lan is this shameless in his conduct.” Jiang Wanyin sneered.

“There is nothing shameless about this, Jiang-gongzi. You should try it sometime. But I am not sure if anyone would be willing. I heard a lot of matchmakers have refused to consider you for marriage. Pity! You will never know the pleasures of the flesh. Aiya! Such a sad state of affairs”, Wei Wuxian put on an act of feeling very sad and Lan Xichen tried very hard to hold his laughter. He could see Jin Zixuan covering his face with his sleeves at the corner of his eye.

“You! You! My mother was right. You are as shameless as your mother.” Jiang Wanyin shouted.

“And you are as terrible as your mother, Jiang-gongzi. And look, here we both are! Do not presume my kindness and patience as my weakness. I will not tolerate you insulting my parents. Keep that in mind”, Wei Wuxian answered seriously. The aura excluded from Wei Wuxian at that time was so powerful and so terrible that even Lan Xichen felt a bit of fear. He thought he saw a hint of red in Wei Wuxian’s eyes, but he was not sure. Jin Zixuan seemed a bit scared as well.

Jiang Wanyin must have also seen something in Wei Wuxian’s face that he stood rooted at the spot. His eyes were darting here and there, and he had gripped his sword tightly. Probably for the first time Jiang Wanyin realised what a fearful opponent Wei Wuxian was and that till now he had been merciful.

In order to defuse the situation, Lan Xichen told the sect heir Jiang, ““That is quite enough, Jiang-gongzi. If you want to join us in this expedition, we should make haste now. We do not have much time”.

He had started to get headaches whenever he was in the vicinity of the Jiang heir.

It was a sombre group of people who came back to Cloud Recesses.

Lan Xichen could never have imagined what waited for them at the lake. They were attacked by water ghouls as soon as they reached the lake. They hopped onto various boats to fight them. By the time they realised they were being lured into a trap within the centre of the lake, it was almost too late. It was only because of the brilliant skills of Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji, that they were able to escape. He was impressed with the skill of the Jin sect heir as well. But, for all the boasting Jiang Wanyin did earlier, he did not live up to his words, much to everyone's disappointment.

The discussion on the way back did not improve Lan Xichen's mood. As they talked about the people responsible for the abyss being present in the Lan area, every one expressed their views.

"Looks like the temperature of the Sun will only increase with time and everyone will be burned sooner or later." Wei Wuxian predicted.

"We will be prepared." Lan Wangji had replied.

"Do not put your nose into things that do not concern you." Jiang Wanyin had sneered at others.

"You are wrong. This is a problem that will affect everyone eventually. If we all keep quiet about this now, the issue will only grow bigger and worse." Jin sect heir had replied to Jiang Wanyin. Lan Xichen was surprised by what Jin Zixuan had said. He never expected this from the Jin sect heir at all, given how pompous he was all the time.

Jiang Wanyin had then smirked at everyone. "Look at those fools! Let me tell you, do not play the hero. The one who strikes first will fall just as fast. I do not want you all to bring shame to our sect. Do not behave in such a way that attracts their attention. If we keep our heads down and do nothing, they will not dare to attack a great sect like ours. Do you understand me?" Jiang Wanyin had instructed his shidish.

Lan Xichen was ashamed. He remembered what Wangji and Wuxian had spoken about the Wens. And much to his horror, he realised that his thoughts had matched with Jiang Wanyin, of all people. He had much to think about.

Silence accompanied all of them after that, all the way to Cloud Recesses, with everyone left to their own thoughts.

After the initial shock had worn off, Lan Xichen was still in contemplation, for the problem was much more complicated than he had thought. What he thought was a simple task to exterminate water ghouls had turned into a battle with a huge waterborne abyss. That it was not some regular night hunt, but a significant event, fraught with political tensions was not lost on Lan Xichen. It was a slap in the face after the words he had spoken just a couple of months back. How ignorant he had been then, to think that being a great gentry sect would offer them the immunity, to think that whatever chaos was there outside will not touch their home. That the problems will not simply go away just because you have closed your eyes. Wangji and Wuxian were right. Xichen needed to talk to his uncle about their next steps and also about setting up the wards Wuxian had gifted them generously.

And before everything else they needed a plan on how to deal with this abyss.

With all these thoughts, Xichen was distressed on the way back. Things had looked very bleak at that very moment. And yet, Lan Xichen was able to find some semblance of joy when he saw Wei Wuxian lovingly buy a basket of fresh loquats for his brother. There is still a hope, he had thought.

—

Next morning, Lan Xichen woke up to the news that the abyss was eliminated overnight by a pair of mysterious cultivators. No one knew who they were. People could only make out that they looked like farmers, travelled from afar. Supposedly they came from nowhere and completely removed the threat of waterborne abyss. They both had vanished as soon as their task was done.

Lan Xichen was both grateful and curious. But he left the mystery unsolved for now because they had other important things to concentrate on, namely the threat of the Wens looming across their mountains.

Once his uncle was back, Lan Xichen discussed the recent happenings and his uncle readily accepted his suggestion to put forth the arrays and wards Wuxian had gifted. Uncle had told him that he would discuss this issue with the other elders. And soon, with their permission, and with the help of the creator Wei Wuxian himself, new wards and shields were in place.

Lan Xichen thought things would get better, at least there would be calm and peace for now. But he relaxed too soon. Within a few days, there was another scandal and with no surprise it involved the Jiang Sect heir. What was surprising was the involvement of the Jin sect heir.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter:

Punching of a peacock by one radioactive grape!

Ten

Chapter Summary

Inevitable breaking of ties

Chapter Notes

I am reading all your comments one by one, and will reply to them soon. The next chapter might take couple of days since tomorrow is Sunday for me and I have decided to pamper myself by not doing anything.

And I saw some of you wondering if Jin Zixuan was also back into the past. No. He did not.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

A broken engagement

Wei Wuxian was amused at the mysterious ways of one's fate. How was he involved in this incident again? He should have remembered what day it was. He should have taken his er-ge on a nice outing in Caiyi town and let his husband spoil him.

Fortunately, Lan Zhan and he were just innocent spectators. On account of that, here they were, sitting in Lan-Lao Shi's office waiting for the Jiang and Jin sect leaders to arrive. Jiang Wanyin and Jin Zixuan were kneeling outside as a punishment for fighting.

Wuxian was sure the engagement would be broken this time around as well. Last time, it was a matter of the son of a servant acting up and punching a sect heir. The said son of the servant was expelled from Cloud Recesses as a result and he was whipped for it too. But the breaking of the engagement was decided by Sect leader Jiang because he did not want his daughter to marry without even modicum of respect, let alone love. It was completely a father's decision and devoid of any political stance.

But this time it was one sect heir punching another sect heir and this added political colours to the incident. It was no longer between two young boys, but between two sects. This could potentially strain the relationship between the Jiang sect and the Jin sect. The reason for the broken engagement would be political. And this time it would be the Jin sect who would break the relationship too.

Sect leader Jiang Fengmian could not afford to lose this important ally, not with the current declining state of affairs at Yunmeng Jiang, not with its sect heir Jiang Wanyin not only failing make friends and connections with other sect disciples, but also single handedly worsen the relationships with his terrible ego and temper, not with the Jiang Wanyin having no shield to prevent the damage or do damage control after the fact. And this would have far reaching consequences for Jiang-guniang and the Jiang sect.

Soon, Lan Qiren invited the sect leaders and their retinue into the office. There was a round of introductions and an entirely unnecessary talk about the weather of all things. The empty conversation went on for a long time. In between, Jiang Fengmian was shocked when Wei Wuxian was introduced.

“You are the son of Wei Changze and Cangse Sanren, Wei Ying.” He asked, holding Wei Wuxian’s shoulder tightly.

Wei Wuxian got out of his hold and bowed to the Jiang sect leader. “Yes, sect leader Jiang. This one is Wei Ying, courtesy name Wei Wuxian”.

“I am your father’s friend. He was my right hand man. How have you been? I looked for you all these years.” For some reason Jiang Fengmian was excited, beyond what one would feel when met with his friend’s missing son. There was a calculating gleam in his eyes that did not go unnoticed by both Lan Wangji and Wei Wuxian, and Wei Wuxian let out a wry smile. Lan Wangji moved close to his husband as if he would take his husband away at an instant notice. Wei Wuxian saw that Lan Qiren had understood the undercurrents as well, while Lan Xichen was clueless as always.

“I have been living well. But, perhaps we should first look at the matter at hand. “ Wei Wuxian replied politely.

“Of course. It should be so. Sect leader Jiang and sect leader Jin, your sons fought each other physically and verbally. Since it involved the betrothal agreement between your sects, Lan sect could not get involved in this incident. Right now both the sect heirs have been punished to kneel down.” Lan Qiren succinctly explained the incident. He then asked Wuxian to explain what he had witnessed.

Wei Wuxian explained the cause and effect of the whole incident, “so, this is what happened, Lan-Lao Shi. Jin-gongzi expressed his dissatisfaction at the engagement and insinuated about the rumours about Jiang-guniang. The Jiang-gongzi took offence to that and punched the Jin sect heir. And that resulted in a physical altercation.”

“Wangji, what is your witness?” Lan Qiren asked his nephew.

“It happened exactly as Wei Ying explained”. La Wangji in a firm tone which did not allow any further questions.

“Now that you know, please handle this matter yourselves. We will leave this room to give you privacy.” Lan Qiren said to two sect leaders present.

“One moment, Lan Qiren. I would like you to be witness to whatever we discuss here”. Jin Guangshan asked the Lan teacher.

“Of course. Xichen, you stay. Wangji, Wuxian, you can leave now. You are no longer needed”.

“Of course, Lan-Lao Shi, come Lan Zhan.” Wei Wuxian and Lan Wanji bowed to the audience present in the room and left.

—

“So, that went well all around.” Wei Ying said dryly to his husband. They were walking around the garden near the library, with Wei Ying holding onto Lan Zhan’s arms, putting

almost all of his weight on it, knowing that his husband is strong enough to carry both of them.

“Mn”.

“The Jiang sect will not look good coming out of this incident”. Wei Ying commented.

“Deservingly so.” Lan Zhan replied.

“Aww! Hanguang-Jun, you are so cute. Offended on behalf of his poor, fragile husband.” Wei Ying cooed.

“Wei Ying was mistreated.”

“My love, that happened a long time ago. This is a new life now. Don’t frown, pretty ge-ge”.

“Mn.”

For a while they walked in silence.

“Hanguang-Jun, guess what Sect leader Jiang would want to talk to me about! I will reward you if you are correct”, Wei Ying asked playfully.

“Wants to replace your father”. Lan Zhan replied. To others it might not seem so, but Wei Ying knew his husband was frowning.

“Aiya! Er-ge ge, do not frown. No one can take me away”, Wei Ying gently caressed his beloved’s brows, “and this is your reward”, he kissed Lan Zhan’s cheek. He was so fond of his Lan Zhan, he could not help but giggle.

“Mn. Will protect Wei Ying.”

“Husband! My poor heart simply cannot take all this! Spare your husband” Wei Ying swooned into Lan Zhan’s arms.

“Mn.”

They continued to stroll around for some more time, hand in hand, till it was time for lunch.

—

Wei Wuxian was invited to have lunch with the Lan family. After the lunch, Lan Qiren informed them of the engagement being dissolved.

“I presume it was the Jin sect leader who wanted to break off the ties.” Wei Wuxian wondered.

“Right you are, Wuxian.” Lan Xichen answered.

“And the Jiang sect leader was against breaking the alliance.” Wei Wuxian asked.

“Yes. But the Jin sect leader brought up the fact that his son did not want this marriage and also that Jiang Wanyin punched his son, thereby insulting the relation between both the sects. Sect leader Jiang had to agree.” Lan Xichen replied.

“But there should be more to it.” Wei Wuxian asked.

“Right again. You are very perceptive, Wuxian. The sect leader Jin asked for reparations for punching his son. Sect leader Jiang had to agree to a couple of trade conditions which would be a loss for Yunmeng Jiang.” Lan Xichen was impressed with the political acumen Wei Wuxian displayed. Indeed, his brother was very wise in his choice.

“It will be troublesome for Jiang-guniang to find a proper match now, unless Jin Zixuan himself wants to wed her later.” Wei Wuxian commented. He hoped that would be the case. But this is a new life and a new timeline. So, let nature take its course, Wei Wuxian thought.

“Yes. It is a sad situation for the lady in question.” Lan Qiren observed.

“ So, now what?” Wei Wuxian asked.

“So, now, Jiang Wanyin has been released from the rest of classes this year, according to his father’s request. The Jiangs would be departing the premises in the evening.” Lan Xichen answered.

“Wuxian, Jiang Fengmian requested to meet you this afternoon. You can use my office. If you want I will be present for the meeting.” Lan Qiren offered.

“Thank you, Lan-Lao Shi. I would very much like you to be present in the meeting. Lan Zhan too, if he is free.” Wei Wuxian requested.

“Mn, will accompany Wei Ying.” Lan Zhan replied.

“You are the best, Lan Zhan”. Wei Ying beamed at his husband.

“Then I will inform Jiang Fengmian. Let us meet in my office in an hour”. Lan Qiren dismissed everyone.

Next chapter:

Meeting of Jiang sect leader and Wei Wuxian.

Eleven

Chapter Summary

Jiang Fengmian is desperate!

Chapter Notes

Had a great weekend! Rewatched "My School President" and "Moonlight Chicken", and now "Tinn-Gun" and "Heart-Li Ming" have established themselves in 2nd place for me and pushed "Pat-Pran" to 3rd place in my list of all time favourite pairings.

Of course, Wangxian is always my top OTP!

If any one is interested, here is my top five as of now (based on the shows I have watched so far)

- 1) Lan Zhan-Wei Ying
- 2) Tinn-Gunn/Heart-Li Ming
- 3) Pat-Pran
- 4) Zhou Zishu-Wen Kexing
- 5) Akk-Ayan

What is yours?

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Meeting a former uncle

“Greetings, Sect leader Jiang”, Wei Wuxian bowed to Jiang Fengmian. The Lans and Wei Wuxian were already waiting in the office when Jiang Fengmian entered the room alone.

“Lan Qiren, I would like to talk to my head disciple’s son alone.” Jiang Fengmian requested.

“Jiang Fengmian, that cannot be done. Wei Wuxian’s parents were my friends too and that way I am his elder. Even though Wei Wuxian is a rogue cultivator, as such, right now he is

under Lan clan protection. Thus, as an elder and as the acting leader of the Lan clan, I cannot leave a junior alone so as to protect his interests. I hope you understand.” Lan Qiren replied firmly, “Of course, I will not interfere in your conversation.”

Having no choice, Jiang Fengmian turned to Wei Wuxian.

“I am glad to see you, Wuxian. I searched for you for many years and I could not find any traces of you. Unfortunately, you had to grow up without a family and without the protection of the sect. But, it is still not too late. How about you come with me to Lotus Pier? You will get to have a loving family. You do not have to be all alone. And you can also learn all about your father, who was my head disciple at that time. It is your legacy, after all.” Jiang Fengmian was the very definition of a caring elder.

“But, didn’t my father leave the Jiang sect? When he died, he was no longer the head disciple. So, pardon me, but I am not sure of the legacy you are talking about, sect leader Jiang?” Wei Wuxian asked.

“Come now, Wuxian. Call me Jiang-shushu”. Jiang Fengmian said in a cajoling tone.

“Apologies, sect leader Jiang. But I do not wish to claim a relationship that does not exist. My father was not part of the Jiang sect long before he died. Hence I do not have the privilege of calling you uncle”. Wei Wuxian replied.

“But we can forge new relationships in remembrance of your father. He would have wanted you to be part of his heritage and his origin. He would want to honour his legacy.” The Jiang sect leader persuaded Wei Wuxian.

“But my parents were both rogue cultivators and I am honouring them by being one.” Wei Wuxian replied.

“But it must be so difficult to survive alone, to be alone without any family. You must have longed for a family as an orphan, Wuxian. How difficult it must have been for you to look for food! How difficult it must have been for you to earn money just to make a living. I will offer my family to you. You get to have a good brother and a loving sister. You will get to be with

your uncle and aunt. Isn't it nice? To be surrounded by a loving family. You can be to my son what your father was to me. You and my son both grow together, support each other, and achieve great things together. And how can what you have learnt on the streets can compare to a formal education in the sect! You get to learn with other disciples and make friends with them. I will even make you my head disciple. When my son becomes the sect leader, you would be his right hand man, an honoured position, the highest position if you will, next only to a sect leader." It was as if Jiang Fengmian was offering an unmatched deal to Wei Wuxian.

For a young boy, an orphan who grew up in the streets, where everyday is a struggle for food and survival, this would be a dream come true. That young boy would grasp this opportunity with both hands and would never let it go, no matter the outcome. But Wei Wuxian was not that young boy anymore. He did not have any illusions. And he had already found a home in his husband.

"Sect leader Jiang, I am grateful for your offer. But I am not sure I quite understand what you mean. You want me to join the Jiang sect when we all know the temperament of Madam of the sect. The stories of how your disciples are being treated in your sect is well known. And you know your son's temperament the best. I am sure you must have enquired about me since you saw me this morning. You must have come to know how skilled I am, and most importantly, my friendships with all the sect heirs and disciples attending the class. Frankly speaking, this is what your son lacks the most, isn't it? So, I wonder the real reason why you want me to join the Jiang sect so desperately. Perhaps you hope that I will be a shield to your son, that I would use my sword skills to be his bodyguard, that I would use my friendships to help your son while he is a sect heir and later a sect leader. Jiang Wanyin has already insulted me, my parents, and my upbringing multiple times in the last couple of months. He thinks a rogue cultivator is beneath him in status. So, I have to ask you, sect leader Jiang, in what way do you see your son treating me as a brother?" Wei Wuxian asked bluntly because he did not want to drag this meeting for long. He would rather spend his time looking at his pretty ge ge and doing nothing else.

"No..no, You misunderstood me, Wei Ying. That was not my intention." The Jiang sect leader tried to appease Wei Wuxian. But he could fool no one. His intentions were very clear, especially after the happenings of that morning when the relationship between the Jins and Jiangs was precarious due to one Jiang Wanyin.

"Everyone here knows the truth of what you intended, sect leader Jiang. Let us all be honest here. I have no intention of joining the Jiang sect. In fact, I do not want to join any sect. I want to travel the land as a rogue cultivator and help wherever required, just like my parents. I want to follow the values that my parents instilled in me. This is my way of offering filial piety to my deceased parents. Please understand." Wei Wuxian bowed to the Jiang sect leader

respectfully. Wuxian knew that the moment he brought up filial piety, any arguments after this from Jiang Fengmian would be futile.

“Still, why not visit Lotus Pier for a while? And my daughter is only a couple of years older than you. A very nice girl. Cooks well too. Why not see if you both are compatible? Your parents surely wish to wed you to a nice girl, and Yanli is the only daughter of the sect leader. One would be lucky to wed her.” Jiang Fengmian tried to entice Wei Wuxian.

Wei Wuxian looked at Lan Zhan incredulously. This was beyond his imagination. Yet, he could understand the reasoning behind it. The Jiang sect was in decline and given how Jiang Wanyin turned out, the Jiang sect leader was desperate to bring Wei Wuxian into the fold by any means possible. After all, Wei Wuxian had the skills and capabilities to help the Jiang sect. What better way to tie him to the sect than marriage! This would make Wei Wuxian forever devoted to Yunmeng Jiang, given that Wei Wuxian did not have any family or any sect to divide his loyalties. This would be a better solution than making him a dead disciple.

“Your daughter was engaged to Jin-gongzi all these years, right? Her engagement was broken just this morning. I heard that she really liked Jin-gongzi.” Wei Wuxian had to ask.

“Yes. But, it was just a young, juvenile love. You know how it goes. She will forget Jin Zixuan in no time. She is an obedient girl and would make an obedient wife. Why don’t you think about it?” Jiang Fengmian actually sounded desperate. Maybe the situation at Yunmeng Jiang was really worse than they all had thought.

“Apologies, Jiang sect leader. I have to decline this.”

“Do not be hasty. Why don’t you visit Lotus Pier and meet her once? If you want to decline after that, it is fine.”

“My answer would always be no.”

“But why? My daughter is really a good girl.”

“Because I am a cutsleeve, Sect leader Jiang. And I am sure Madam Yu and Jiang-gongzi would not appreciate a cut sleeve visit to their home.” Wei Wuxian answered dryly, “And I already have someone in my heart” he continued hurriedly, before Jiang Fengmian offered his son for consideration, for the sect leader looked very adamant about taking Wei Wuxian to Lotus Pier. The horror of it would end Wei Wuxian completely.

“Oh!” Jiang Fengmian was visibly agitated, but it was his own making. “May I know who the man you are in love with is?” As if he wanted to call out Wei Wuxian’s lie about being a cut sleeve, as if he believed that no such man existed.

But to his utter shock Wei Wuxian replied, “Why? It is the Second Jade of Lan, of course. Who would not fall for such a pretty, pretty, face? And have you seen his skills and strength? He is so funny too. Really, Lan er-ge ge is the best.” Wei Wuxian gushed with joy and love that could not be concealed, and he almost swooned into Lan Zhan’s arms.

“Mn. Love Wei Ying” Lan Zhan replied as he steadied Wei Ying into a proper sitting position and Wei Wuxian gently kissed the back of Lan Wangji’s hand.

“Ahem! That is enough display of affection, Wangji, Wuxian.” Lan Qiren reprimanded.

“Apologies Lan-Lao Shi. It is impossible to contain myself when I see your nephew.” Wei Wuxian winked.

“And you agree to this, Lan Qiren. Does the Lan sect approve of cut sleeve relations now?”, Jiang Fengmian was incredulous.

“There is no rule in the Lan sect that speaks against a cut sleeve relationship, Jiang Fengmian. Wei Wuxian is kind and intelligent, a credit to his parents. He would be a good mate for my nephew. Moreover, I want my nephew to be happy.” Lan Qiren replied.

“Thank you, uncle Lan. I will take care of Lan Zhan.” Wei Wuxian bowed to Lan Zhan’s uncle.

“Thank you, uncle”, Lan Wangji too bowed to Lan Qiren.

“Jiang Fengmian, I do not want to know your agenda behind you insisting to take Wei Wuxian to Lotus Pier. The boy has already declined your offer. As far as what happened in the morning goes, for the relation between the Jiang sect and the Lan sect, I hope you will correct your son’s behaviour. In these troubled times, it is not good to be without any allies.” Lan Qiren concluded the meeting.

Jiang Fengmian had to return to Lotus Pier without Wei Wuxian, without having his agenda fulfilled, and with a son who had disgraced his sect and a complete disappointment to both his parents.

—

After the troubled first half, the rest of the year went by smoothly. The year-long lecturers ended on a good note. By then everyone in the Lan sect, even the guests, knew that Wei Wuxian was courting the Second Jade of Lan. They could see a pretty Wei Wuxian chattering and giggling about everything and anything while a silent and calm Lan Wangji looked at his lover fondly. They made a beautiful pair. They also experienced how possessive Lan Wangji was, when one of them went a little too close to Wei Wuxian. If his glare could kill, then there would be a lot of bodies strewn around Cloud Recesses.

All in all, it was a wonderful year. But it was only calm before the storm.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter : First move in the war

Twelve

Chapter Summary

Lans under attack!

Chapter Notes

Wei Ying will not use resentful energy because things are not dire and he does not need to use it, unlike last time when it was the only course of action for him.

Another thing to note is that, they are stronger than their peers. Because they formed their core earlier and their size and qi is better than others. But they did start from the beginning when they came back. Their experience in the last life is the only biggest contributing factor. But they are not completely OP, unless WY uses yin energy. But WY has decided not to participate in the war and thus there is no need for him to use yin energy for the war effort. (He will use in his daily hunting).

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Attack on the Cloud Recesses

Wei Wuxian was near the Tingshan He clan when he got the news of the discussion conference at the Wen sect, along with Lan Zhan's letter. Except for a few changes, the discussion conference went along just as last time. Lan Zhan did not participate in archery or any other contest. Given his experience of last life, it would not have been fair to other contestants. Taking his example, Lan Xichen also withdrew from the contest. Because of this, Jin Zixuan won first place, with other Lan and Nie disciples took the next four places. The remaining five spots out of the top ten places were taken by minor sect disciples.

The Jiang sect performed abysmally and it was a big slap in the face that they were not even placed among the top ten. Wei Wuxian was not surprised with this. Given Madam Yu and Jiang Wanyin disposition, none of the other Jiang disciples would be as good as the sect heir and the head disciple, Jiang Wanyin. If the head disciple is mediocre, then there is no hope for the others.

Like last time, Wen Ruohan showed his true colours, with his son insulting the other sect leaders.

Tension was building up in the cultivation world.

Wei Wuxian travelled back to Cloud Recesses to assist Lan Zhan when the Wen sect attacked.

—

“Welcome back, Wuxian. We have missed your presence in Cloud Recesses, especially Wangji. I never knew my brother could sulk.” Lan Xichen greeted Wei Wuxian as entered the gates of Cloud Recesses.

“Ah! I missed your brother too, Zewu-Jun. And how are you and your uncle?”

“Please, call me Xichen-ge. And we are doing fine.”

“Xichen-ge it is. But we do not have much time. I have come bearing bad news. Please take me to your uncle, Xichen-ge and I will share everything.”

“Of course. Come this way.”

—

“Wen Xu is heading towards the Cloud Recesses with an army. He will reach in a week. We need to be prepared.” Wei Wuxian did not waste any time making small talk.

Lan Qiren, Lan Xichen, and Lan Wangji were sitting down, listening to what Wei Wuxian had to say.

“Wei Ying, have tea first. Take a breath.” Lan Zhan offered him the plum blossom tea that he always liked.

“Lan Zhan, you are too sweet. My heart cannot stand it!” Wei Wuxian teased.

“Mn. Wei Ying’s heart will survive”, Lan Zhan replied.

For a few seconds no one else spoke to allow Wei Wuxian catch a breath and have his tea. He did look travel worn.

“How sure are you?” Lan Qiren asked after some time.

“Very much so. I have followed them for a while and listened to their plans. They are planning to set fires on your buildings and engage in a fight. Su Shi is with them who has given them valuable information. They have jade tokens to enter the sect lands, courtesy of Su Shi.” Wei Wuxian narrated.

“That traitor!” Lan Xichen exclaimed.

“Now is not the time to indulge in excess emotions, Xichen. We need to think of countermeasures.” Lan Qiren.

“Enable both the shields I had gifted. The fire shields would save your buildings in case they send fire arrows over the sky or if they somehow manage to enter the sect” Wei Wuxian suggested.

“Mn. Send elders, non-combatants, children, and servants, to the innermost caves near the cold pond. They should carry supplies to last for a while. Then seal the area completely so

that outsiders would not notice” Lan Wangji said.

“Yes. I will modify the outer shield to not allow anyone inside the sect, even with the jade tokens. This way we can counter Su Shi’s plans. And once the fighting is done, I will remove this feature so that you all can use the jade tokens as usual. Although I would suggest you change the tokens now that they are compromised. I can help you with that, so that old tokens are obsolete.” Wei Wuxian offered.

“All the people who can fight will be outside the shield. We will engage in the fight there. And Wei Ying’s solution will make sure that none of them could sneak into the sect using the jade tokens, while we are busy fighting” Lan Wangji suggested.

“And notify Caiyi town and the nearby villages to hide as soon as possible. That way they are out of the way of the Wen soldiers and civilians will be safe”. Wei Wuxian added to that, “Lan Zhan, did we miss anything?”

“No.”

“Well done, Wangji, Wuxian. It is a well thought out plan. Xichen, do you want to add anything?” Lan Qiren asked.

“No, uncle.” Lan Xichen replied.

“Then we will set about doing what we have discussed here. I will talk to the elders. Wuxian, you go rest in your rooms. The guest quarters you stayed last time are cleaned regularly and kept aside for you. Wangji, Xichen, you come with me to help execute this plan. We will meet tomorrow to discuss the progress and to see if we have missed anything” Lan Qiren said.

Everyone was ready when Wen Xu brought his army to Cloud Recesses. The fight lasted for a few hours. Wei Wuxian tore across the army, wielding his Fenghuang with reckless abandon. It was a wild display of competence, as though he was dancing on the heads of his enemies separated from their bodies. He was the fire that would burn the sun down. On the other hand, Lan Wangji used Bichen to bring terror to the Wen army. He struck his enemies with deadly precision. His fury was as cold and emotionless as his demeanour. No one escaped from Bichen. He was as steady as a mountain, protecting his home.

Together, Wei Ying and Lan Zhan were unstoppable. They fought together and it was like witnessing a dance. They anticipated each other's moves and worked around each other seamlessly. There was no weak point to be exploited.

They were inspiring to the Lan disciples fighting with them. When they saw Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji fight, they fought harder than ever.

For the first time Lan Xichen had to kill fellow cultivators instead of demons and monsters. The first kill was difficult. But after a while, he disposed of his enemies skillfully.

At one point Su Shi tried to use the jade token to enter into the sect. But that did not work. Rather, there was a backlash from the token and Su Shi used a transportation talisman to run from the battle. Seeing that, Wen Xu tried sending fire arrows over the sky and into the Lan buildings, but Wei Ying's shield held true. It covered the entire sect area in a dome shape and none of the tricks worked.

The battle went on for some time. Apart from Lan elders, Wei Ying, and Lan Zhan, most of the Lan disciples were getting tired and their qi were depleted at a faster rate. Although this looked bad, the same thing happened at the Wen side too. But the Wen soldiers were a lot more in numbers compared to the Lans. If this continued, the situation would only become worse.

Seeing that, Wei Ying and Lan Zhan left their ranks and tore into the Wen soldiers. Given the opportunity, Wei Ying and Lan Zhan wanted to get rid of Wen Xu in this battle. Everywhere they went, the heads rolled out on the ground, dead bodies were strewn across the ground. It was a bloodbath.

Unfortunately, even before Wei Ying or Lan Zhan could go near him, Wen Xu realised that Wen sliders were on the losing side and he strategically left the field along with his trusted soldiers, and let the remaining army act as a cover for his escape. Wei Ying and Lan Zhan did not follow the escapees, but helped the Lan disciples to fight the remaining soldiers. Half an hour later, the battle came to an end with the Lan sect killing all the enemies.

Even though the Lan sect won this battle, there were few casualties. A few of the Lan disciples had died. Lan Wangji and Lan Xichen played Rest for two hours to lay all the dead soldiers, including the Wen soldiers to rest in peace. Fortunately, they were able to save Lan Zhan's father this time. He would remain in seclusion for years to come and die of natural causes after a long time, but that was for later.

Although the inner parts of the sects were safe, the parts outside the shield had taken in considerable damage. It would take a lot of time to rebuild it.

Wei Wuxian spent a lot of time helping the Lans to tend the wounded, clean the premises, and with everything that needed to be done.

Once, everything was put to some semblance of order, Lan elders gathered in a hall and asked Wei Wuxian to join them.

“Lan sect thanks you, Wei Wuxian, for your contribution. Without you, we would have lost this battle and we would have lost many of our disciples.” Lan Qiren and other Lan elders bowed to Wei Wuxian in gratitude.

“Ah! It is of no significance. I only helped because this is Lan Zhan's home and he would be sad if something happened to his family.” Wei Wuxian replied.

“No matter what your motivation was, your help was valuable. This is the jade token made for you. You can enter and exit the sect anytime you want. Apart from forbidden sections and private residences, you can access all parts of Cloud Recesses. You will be considered an honorary member of the Lan Clan and will forever be your backing.” Lan Qiren handed over the new jade token to Wei Wuxian.

“I accept this gift and I thank uncle Lan and all the Lan elders. I will keep this safe and will not let it fall into the hands of others” Wei Wuxian bowed to all the Lan elders.

“Come, Wei Ying. Rest now.” Lan Wangji took his elbow and guided him over to his rooms.

“Ah! Er-ge ge, always so solicitous to your husband”, Wei Ying offered a tired smile.

“It is my privilege to care for you, Wei Ying”. Lan Zhan replied.

“Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan, you *just* cannot say this. Oh! My poor heart. As a punishment, you should carry your husband to his rooms” Wei Ying pouted.

“Mn”. Lan Zhan lifted Wei Ying in a bridal carry and took his husband to his room. Wei Ying knew his husband was as tired as him. But he also knew that his husband would be agitated and would not be able to settle down properly until he took care of Wei Ying in some way. Only when Wei Ying was comfortable would his husband rest.

Once they reached his room, Wei Ying allowed his husband to pamper him to heart’s content, “Lan Zhan, let go now. Don’t worry about me. You are just as tired. Have a rest yourself, my love. I will come to you at night”. With that Wei Ying sent his Lan Zhan away.

—

Wei Wuxian stayed in the Lan sect for a couple of months and helped them rebuild what was damaged. But soon it was parting for Wei Ying and Lan Zhan, as it was time for indoctrination at the Wen clan. Since Lan Wangji’s father was still alive, Lan Xichen was still the heir. Thus both Lan Xichen and Lan Zhan were expected to attend the camp, along with other senior disciples.

Next chapter: Indoctrination!!

Thirteen

Chapter Summary

Cave adventures and one radioactive grape!

Chapter Notes

So, the chapter count increased by one. I could not help it! It is all because of the angry grape. I had to get into his mind and write one whole section of it!

Please note that I do not agree with whatever Jiang Cheng is thinking in this chapter or any chapter for that matter. All the abusive and curse words are his only, and does not represent my opinion!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Incidents at Indoctrination

Wei Wuxian stayed near the Muxi mountain, hiding from the Wen soldiers, ever since the indoctrination started. Although he had full confidence in his husband to carry out the whole rescue from the Xuanwu cave, he still wanted to be nearby just in case.

It would be easy this time around. Lan Zhan was not injured and his brother was with him. Moreover, there was no Xuanwu beast to cause havoc. So, it should be something Lan Zhan and Lan Xichen would be able to handle.

He received a letter from Lan Zhan after a few days and got to know that Lan Zhan and all the Lan disciples were back to Cloud Recesses and every disciple from every sect was saved and sent home. The whole thing had happened exactly as Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji had anticipated.

Lan Wangji observed all the Lan disciples as they got ready for the indoctrination. Although they had won a decisive victory against the Wens in the first battle, the war was far from over. Right now, the attack on the Lans was considered an isolated incident. But, if they wanted everyone to unite, they needed something more and this Wen camp was one way of gaining allies. So, this move was also a political one, as much as a way of saving everyone in the camp.

“Store your swords in Qiankun pouches and use this invisibility talisman to hide the pouch”, Lan Wangji instructed everyone.

“Wangji, is this talisman invented by your Wei Wuxian?” Lan Xichen asked his brother.

“Mn.”

“He is a genius, isn’t he?” Lan Xichen was in awe.

“Mn. Wei Ying is brilliant”. Lan Wangji answered. Being able to understand his brother’s tone better than most people, Lan Xichen could make out how proud his brother was. Was this showing off one’s beloved to others? Lan Xichen shook his head in amusement.

“Remember, if they ask for our swords, make sure to give them the dummies and do not be aggressive unnecessarily”, Lan Xichen advised everyone.

“Yes”, all the Lan disciples agreed.

Soon, they were on their way to the Wen camp.

It was Wen Chao, along with his protector Wen Zhuliu who welcomed them. And as predicted, all of them were asked to submit their swords. There was a disciple who refused to hand over his sword and his core was ruthlessly crushed by Wen Zhuliu as a punishment and

as a warning to others. All the sect heirs and disciples were horrified when they saw their fellow cultivator was crippled for life. The whole camp was subdued after that and everyone toed the line for the time being.

—

For the next few days, Wen Chao took them for night hunting. Without their swords and without proper food and rest, everyone was drained of their energy. The sect heirs and the disciples could not keep their calm and composure against such blatant provocation. It was the Lans who looked after them and made sure that nothing untoward happened.

Finally, it was the day Wen Chao would take them on a cave hunting expedition.

Lan Wangji secretly handed a talisman to his brother.

“Wangji, What is this?”, Lan Xichen asked.

“Wei Ying created it after he saw Wen Xu getting away. This is an immobility talisman. It will keep a cultivator immobile for a few seconds.”

“What is your plan, Wangji?” Lan Xichen asked after a few seconds.

“Today we can fight and escape. Wangji will kill Wen Zhuliu and brother can take care of Wen Chao using this talisman.” Lan Wangji replied.

“Fine. That would work, I suppose.” Lan Xichen was still unsure.

“Careful, brother. This talisman needs a lot of our qi. Use it wisely.” Lan Wangji warned.

“Of course, Wangji.” Lan Xichen replied.

Soon, all of them were on their way to find an elusive cave.

—

Jiang Wanyin was angry. He was angry at the situation, he was angry that he was stuck with stupid Jiang disciples, but mostly he was angry with the Lan sect. How dare they provoke the Wen sect during the conference! If not for them winning most of the top ten places, they would not have been attacked by the Wens. And if not for the Lans humiliating the Wens in the archery contest, why would the Wen sect leader organise this indoctrination camp for all of them. So, he was terribly angry and he was itching to teach the Lans, especially that uppity Lan Wangji a lesson. However, that was not the time for it. He would be patient and keep his head down for now, just as his mother instructed. His mother was sure that the Wens would not do anything to the Jiangs if they did not interfere and he agreed with her. But it was difficult to keep his mouth shut and not engage in any fight with the Lans. However, he was swordless and hence powerless, in any case.

After torturing them for many days by the Wens, now they were asked to find some unknown cave which held some mythical beast. They had walked around for a long time in search of this place, they had spent most part of the day looking for it, and they were quite tired.

Soon, Jiang Wanyin saw Lan Wangji release some talisman and there was a cave entrance visible to everyone.

Wen Chao was excited and took everyone into the cave. After walking for some time, they were at the edge of a steep. It was all dark down the cliff. No one would make out what was there. So, they had tied the ropes onto the rocks present in the cave and Wen Chao asked the cultivators held captive to get down first, just to make sure that they were hit first from whatever was there at the bottom. Everyone had an issue with that and Jin Zixuan tried to argue with Wen Chao. Instead of answering, Wen Chao tossed some random disciple into the abyss and that shut everyone up. That made Jiang Wanyin firm in his decision to keep quiet and be submissive for now.

Within a few minutes, everyone came down the cliff. There were a lot of limestone and rock formations spanning a lot of area inside the cave. There was also an ancient pool. If at all

there is a beast, it must be within the water body, Jiang Wanyin supposed.

Quickly, Wen Chao ordered everyone to create ruckus to draw out the monster. Soon, there was a cacophony of calls and roars from the cultivators. It was deafening. But there was no beast.

Jiang Wanyin saw Wen Chao becoming red with anger, he saw Wen Chao's slut Wang Lingjiao leaning onto him and pleasing him with her coquettish ways, to appease his anger, and Jiang Sect heir snorted, what a stupid pair! This Wang Lingjiao is just a servant and yet she behaved like a lady. And Wen Chao is just a mediocre cultivator, riding high on his father's prowess, as if he was the greatest cultivator alive, Jiang Wanyin thought waspishly, completely forgetting that he himself was such a person.

It was a commotion which brought back Jiang Wanyin from his thoughts. Apparently, Wen Chao wanted to injure someone, draw their blood as a living bait for the monster and Wang Lingjiao had suggested some Jin servant, a girl called Luo Qingyang. Now, Lan Wangji and Jin Zixuan were standing in front of that stupid servant girl in order to protect her. As a retaliation, Wen Chao had ordered his soldiers to kill both Lan Wangji and Jin Zixuan.

Jiang Wanyin could not understand how they both could be so misguided. Luo Qingyang is just a servant. What is the use of making an enemy out of the Wen sect in order to save her? It was okay if a servant died. It was not a big deal. It is their job to die for their masters. Lan Wangji and Jin Zixuan had no business saving her. This would not end well for them. It is better to not provoke Wen Chao and his ilk. "Keep quiet and do not do anything. Else mother will punish you with Zidian, remember that." Jiang sect heir hissed at his disciples, "Just wait and see what happens to Lan Wangji and Jin Zixuan. They will meet their end soon." he sneered.

"Yes, da-shixiong." The Jiang disciples murmured. No matter how unwilling some of them were, they had to obey their head disciple and the sect heir. Moreover, the disciples who were promoted to be the trusted confidants for the Jiang Wanyin turned out to be of similar disposition as Jiang sect heir. So, they happily agreed to his order.

However, within a few minutes the situation worsened and the Lans and the Jins started fighting with the Wen soldiers. Jiang Wanyin pushed the other Jiang disciples to a corner. He did not want to shame his sect and his mother, and interfere with whatever is happening.

Jiang sect disciples gasped as they saw all the Lans take out their spiritual swords from their hidden Qiankun bags. Apparently, these bags were invisible and they marvelled at the power of the talisman used. They could not help but be impressed with the prowess of Lan Wangji and Zewu-Jun. Some of them were ashamed that compared to the twin jades their sect heir was very mediocre. Even Jin sect heir was more skilled than Jiang Wanyin.

“Just look at them inviting danger to their sect. You all listen to me. Let others play a hero. They will pay the price for it anyway and it had nothing to do with our sect. Do not do anything to attract their attention to our sect. Just keep your head down and do nothing, and our sect will not be targeted. Remember, I will kill whoever helps them”, Jiang Wanyin threatened the Jiang disciples angrily and they all murmured their agreements.

The battle was swift and fierce. Jiang Wanyin saw Wang Lingjiao trying to brand Luo Qingyang on her face and the Jin servant had used the sword from a dead Wen soldier to kill the whore. He saw Lan Wangji fight with Wen Zhuliu for some time and after a while, Lan Wangji had used a talisman to keep the Core Melting Hand stay still and then behead the Wen dog.

On the other hand, the Jiang disciples saw that Wen Chao wanted to run away after Wen Zhuliu was slaughtered, only to be stopped by a talisman used by Zewu-Jun. Soon, Wen Chao was also killed in a pathetic way.

Meanwhile, the Jin disciples and other cultivators had wrestled the swords from the Wen soldiers and they all proceeded to eliminate the remaining Wens. Everything was over within half an hour.

Soon, the injured cultivators were taken out of the cave by the Lan disciples on their spiritual swords. The capable ones had used the ropes to climb up and they too were out of the cave. No one bothered with the Jiangs. All the sect heirs and other prominent disciples of various sects had noticed that the Jiang sect heir did not bother to help them in any way. Even then, they did not stop the Jiang disciples using the ropes to come out of the cave. In any case, they were busy treating the wounds and planning the next steps.

“Zhang sect heir, Zhang Yusen offers his gratitude to the Lan sect for their timely assistance. I would inform my father and sect leader of your help”, a cultivator wearing a green robe

bowed to Zewu-Jun and Lan Wangji.

“Yes, please accept gratitude from the Ye sect as well”, a cultivator with a brown robe bowed to the Lans. This way, all the sect heirs and disciples offered their gratitude for the Lans and some even thanked Jin Zixuan.

Jiang Wanyin could only look at this closeness of all the sect heirs towards the Lan sect, with jealousy and seethe in anger on the inside. How dare these minor sect heirs and disciples ignore the sect heir of a great sect like Yunmeng Jiang! That was a blatant disrespect. Jiang Wanyin noted down all the sect heirs who did not show any goodwill towards the Jiang sect heir and decided he will talk to his mother about not associating with these sects anymore. That should teach them a lesson, he thought, when they have to strive for survival without the help from a great sect.

Once the pleasantries were over, they took half a day to recover their qi, and soon all the cultivators left in small groups towards their sects. With this, the indoctrination had come to an end. Most importantly, the Lan sect had managed to find considerable allies if and when the war breaks out.

—

Once he received the message from his beloved, Wei Wuxian decided to head back to Cloud Recesses as well. He had managed to create a device which would help the allied forces in the war and that would be his only contribution for the war.

Chapter End Notes

Next: Grapes are crushed and lotuses are burned.

Fourteen

Chapter Summary

Crushed grape juice, anyone?

Chapter Notes

So, the war begins, I guess. And Wei Ying's plans are coming to fruition.

Enjoy...

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Attack on the Lotus Pier

Beloved Hanguang-Jun,

I have missed you so much, my love. My days and nights are so lonely without your beautiful self and the refuge I find in your arms. I crave for your claiming touches and your raging passion. You take care of my heart so delicately, more than I ever could. Your presence alone can soothe all my hurts. Tell me, how can I not be in love with you?

I am planning to venture into Yunmeng Jiang territory soon. You would be glad to know that our plans for years in the making are bearing fruits. We have managed to save many villages and common people now. Our dear merchant Li Bai Yi and his fellow merchant friends have managed to train all the villagers and townships they came across in their travels with the evacuation plans in case of any soldier activity nearby. I am hoping that the people of Lotus Pier will be able to save themselves with this plan. Even though I did not want to do anything with the Jiang sect itself, the town people had always been nice to me in my childhood. I cannot just live them to their fate when the Wens attack the sect. With this, the last bit of my gratitude and debts from the last life would be paid completely.

Looking forward to seeing my Lan Zhan soon.

Always yours

Wei Ying

—

When he was very close to the Gusu, a few months after the indoctrination camp, Wei Wuxian heard people talking about the Wens attack on the Jiang sect. The news of it had spread like fire in the cultivation world and finally, all the sects had managed to form an alliance, as though this attack was the last straw that broke the camel's back.

He was staying at an inn at that time and while having dinner at the restaurant, he overheard people talking about the massacre of the Lotus Pier.

“Did you hear about the Lotus Pier? The whole sect was destroyed, everyone was killed.” A blue robed cultivator said to his companion. There were two cultivators sitting at the next table and they all looked to be rogue cultivators. Their clothes showed comfort instead of luxury. They had the air of someone who had a lot of experience and they seemed to be in their third decade of life. Moreover, they had a heroic air about them which spoke well of their character.

“Gentlemen, this one is Wei Wuxian, a rogue cultivator like yourselves. Allow me to buy you tonight’s meal and all you can drink wine in return for all the news you have”. Wei Wuxian bowed to both of them.

“Of course, of course. Wei-sanren. Come sit at our table.” The grey robed man said, “I am Hua Meng and my friend here is Liu Xin”, pointing at his blue robed companion.

“You seem to be quite young for a rogue cultivator.” Liu Xin asked.

“Ah! My parents were rogue cultivators and they died early. Since then I have travelled as a rogue cultivator myself in honour of my parents.” Wei Wuxian answered. Wei Wuxian took

his own glass and wine bottle and joined their table. He asked the waiter to bring two bottles of their finest wine and all the delicious snacks they had.

“Admirable sentiments, Wei-sanren.” Liu Xin commented.

“Let us all drink to that. And a fine evening with you esteemed gentlemen.” Wei Wuxian raised his cup and drank the entire content of the cup. The two cultivators at the table followed his suit.

“Here...here...”, they said in unison.

“I heard Lotus Pier was attacked. Such a tragedy!” Wei Wuxian initiated the conversation after they were all a bit drunk.

“Yes. I heard it from my friend in Yiling, who heard it from an eye witness. Wen Xu attacked the Lotus Pier with his army and no one survived. The wen-dogs killed all of them.” Hua Meng told Wei Wuxian.

“Really, do you know what exactly happened? Who is this eye witness?” Wei Wuxian asked.

“He was a servant of the Jiangs. He was at the hall when Wen Xu had a meeting with Madam Yu. He was lucky enough to escape the battle, although he was severely hurt. He played dead during the attack and escaped when the opportunity provided. I also heard that Wen Xu’s timing was perfect because he came to Yunmeng Jiang just when the sect leader was away” the cultivator Hua Meng replied.

“But where was Jiang Fengmian when this happened?” Liu Xin asked. Wei Wuxian simply opted to listen instead of talking. He kept filling their cups with wine and their plates with food.

“He was away from the sect for some unknown reason.” Hua Meng answered, draining wine from his cup.

“Really? He was a brave man then, this servant.” Wei Wuxian said. Seeing that both their wine cups were empty, he promptly filled their cups with fragrant wine again, and asked the waiter to bring more wine and sweetmeats to the table.

Hua Meng nodded at Wei Wuxian in thanks and answered. “Yes. Yes. And here is what happened, according to him. Wen Xu asked for an explanation and reparation from the Jiang sect. Apparently, the Jiang sect heir and their disciples did not do anything during the indoctrination camp, did not help the Wens, while his brother Wen Chao was being killed in some cave. When Madam Yu expressed that she would submit all the Jiang disciples present in the cave at that time to the Wen sect for punishment, Wen Xu agreed and asked her to beat all those disciples with Zidian and cut their hands. He said, and I quote “they did not raise their hands to protect my brother.” And she did exactly as he ordered.”

“What a horrible woman! And stupid too! Why would you punish your best disciples when there is an imminent conflict?” Liu Xin exclaimed. He did not realise how a madam of the sect could not put the interest of the sect first. Instead she was appeasing the enemy at the door. One can clearly see that they did not come with good intentions.

“Indeed. Wen Xu then informed Madam Yu that they would open a Wen supervisory office at Lotus Pier. “ Hua Meng said, “Here is when it gets interesting. My friend was still flabbergasted when he told me this. Supposedly, the Jiang sect heir asked the Wen sect heir, why would they open the supervisory office since they did what Wen Xu asked. According to this servant, Wen Xu and his fellow soldiers laughed for a long time at Jiang Wanyin.”

“Then what happened?” Liu Xin was very curious. He took a bite of the delicious Osthomas cake that Wei Wuxian had asked to be served. It was really delicious and he took another bite of it. Then he looked at his friend to know more.

“Then Wen Xu scoffed at Jiang Wanyin, “do you really think we would spare your sect? Till now it was just us having fun at your expense. You really are a very stupid person with a self-inflated ego, aren’t you?” And Jiang Wanyin actually shouted and cursed at Wen Xu in reply.” his fellow cultivator replied.

“How naive is he, the Jiang sect heir and how stupid is this Madam Yu! Do they think that the Wens will not do anything to the Jiangs after what they did to the Lans and the Nies? Who

made him the sect heir? What was his father thinking?” Liu Xin did not know what to think. This Jiang Wanyin was indeed a very mediocre cultivator with no political acumen. His father did not teach him anything despite being a sect leader himself. He did not think of what would become of his sect and what would happen to his people when his son becomes the sect leader.

“That is when Madam Yu got really angry and attacked Wen Xu with Zidian”, Hua Meng continued, “After that it was a bloodbath. I heard Jiang Fengmian came back in the meantime. Both Madam Yu and the Jiang sect leader died in the battle. Everyone at Lotus Pier was slaughtered.”

“Not everyone. The Jiang sect heir, along with two senior disciples - likely his bodyguards - are alive and they are in hiding right now. And Jiang-guniang was sent to Meishan Yu just before this. So, there is that at least”.

All fell silent after that. It was truly a tragedy.

Wei Wuxian was not surprised by this. Madam Yu and Jiang Wanyin always thought that the Wens would not dare to kill the sect heirs since they were from the gentry. And everything would be fine as long as they bowed their heads and did nothing. How incredibly stupid, Wei Wuxian thought. Yunmeng waterways were always strategically important if there was to be a war. No matter what, Wen Ruohan would have attacked Lotus Pier or occupied Lotus Pier using supervisory offices, just like he attacked Cloud Recesses unprovoked and set up supervisory offices in other sects. There was no way around it. No one was safe from the Wen sect.

And yet, instead of understanding this, they had blamed a young boy for their destruction. As if Wen Ruohan placed such significance on a random head disciple. That is why, even in his first life, he never believed that he was the reason for the attack on the Lotus Pier, no matter that Jiang Wanyin kept insisting that he was guilty of it throughout his first and second life. He never bothered correcting Jiang Wanyin because there was no point and he was too used to appeasing Jiang Cheng ever since he was a small child.

And the sad part was that they never allowed Wei Ying to invent anything to help safeguard Lotus Pier better. They refused to make plans for any eventuality even after what happened at the indoctrination. They never planned any evacuation measures just in case.

That Wang Lingjiao as a servant was ordering the Madam of the sect was more important to Madam Yu than the imminent danger. Madam Yu never realised they were poking at her weak points, bringing up unpleasant topics, goading her to attack first. And attacked she did, in a fit of anger, losing all rationale.

Wens were already inside, along with their army. And Madam Yu herself had invited them into her home. No one would escape in case of any battle. And yet Madam Yu had taken the worst possible path.

Allowing them to have their office would have helped most of them to be alive, especially the innocents. And even in the worst case, they would have had a chance to fight later. Alive, one can still fight at a later date. Dead, that would be the end of it.

But, Madam Yu had made sure everyone died with her, maybe just to give time for her son to escape.

Fortunately this time Wei Wuxian had arranged it so that the civilians at the Lotus Pier could hide when the Wens came. This was what Wei Wuxian had been working for in the last few years. And Li Bai Yi, the merchant from Caiyi was of great help. They had established a system in all the towns and villages Wei Wuxian had been to and in all the places where the Li Bai Yi's chain of trade reached. All the young and able people in every place would be on a lookout for the soldiers, be it Wens or from any other clans, taking turns and working in shifts. The moment they see a soldier, they would all hide in a nearby safe zone created for this purpose. There would be enough supplies to last for sometime, kept fresh using Wei Wuxian's talismans. And they would also activate the shields invented by Wei Wuxian, so that they are well hidden. The system had worked very well in many areas. Many civilians were saved this way, including the villages in Qishan Wen. Villagers in Qishan Wen were no less innocent than others.

Slowly, in the next few years, throughout the war, Wei Wuxian and his team would relocate the Wen villagers and non-combatants to other places and reestablish them with new identities. It would be undertaken in smaller batches so as not arouse any suspicion. Thus, by the time the war ended, at least some of the Qishan Wen people would have vanished from the map. Although Wei Wuxian could not save everyone, this way, he was confident that he would be able to save the majority of the people. But that was all later.

For now, Wei Wuxian had two rogue cultivators to entertain. With enough food and wine, the conversation took a turn from the Yunmeng Jiang attack to various travel anecdotes. Wei Wuxian learnt that Hua Meng and Liu Xin had been rogue cultivators for many years now and they have been travelling together for more than six years. They met by chance when they both ventured into a village plagued by demon vines and liberated the people from the terror. When they battled the demon vines together, they found themselves to be like minded and since then, they have travelled together, helping where they can.

“What a wonderful tale of friendship and courage! I will raise this toast to you in admiration.” Wei Wuxian raised his cup to his new friends and drained the wine in one gulp.

“Wei-sanren, we cannot accept this huge praise!” Hua Meng replied after he also drank the wine from his cup.

“We are just a pair of humble cultivators”. Liu Xin too added his words.

“So, what are your plans now? Do you perhaps wish to join the war? I heard that all the cultivators who want to fight the Wens are gathering at Qinghe.” Wei Wuxian asked.

“Not really. What do we know about cultivation sect politics? Those great sects and their stupid egos! Ha!” Hua Meng scoffed.

“True. We just wish to travel and help people.” Liu Xin answered.

“In that case, I do have a proposal for you.” Wei Wuxian said, making the other two curious.

“Do tell, Wei-sanren”, Hua Meng asked.

Wei Wuxian then explained about his plans to help the villages with Li Bai Yi and his merchant group. Of course, he did not talk about how he tended to help the Wen villages as well. Although he somewhat trusted these two cultivators, he did not know much about them and their stance on the Wen people. But, Wei Wuxian was almost sure that this pair of

cultivators would help other villages. In any case, it is always beneficial for the rogue cultivators to operate in groups and have access to this merchant network.

“So, you can take this token and contact any of these shops in any of the villages. They would be able to provide you with the news and also the locations where your help would be needed. You can also send messages through this network to other cultivators. There are already a few of the rogue cultivators working with me on this. It would be of great help to people if you two could join too. In turn, you can also ask your other friends to join as well.” Wei Wuxian persuaded.

“What a great cause and a great plan!” Hua Meng expressed.

“Yes, we would definitely think about this, Wei-sanren. If what you said is true, it would make helping the people more organised and more effective.” Liu Xin said in admiration.

“And it would also be easy for rogue cultivators to get help from fellow rogue cultivators in case of emergencies”. Hua Meng added. He looked very impressed and there was respect in his eyes as he looked at Wei Wuxian. He could never underestimate Wei Wuxian because of his age anymore, he thought.

“Of course. You can decide to join our group any time you want. You do have the tokens with you, in any case.” Wei Wuxian drank his last cup of wine and finished his last bit of the cake.

With that the evening came to an end. Come morning, the pair of cultivators, Hua Meng and Liu Xin would travel towards the Jin lands, and Wei Wuxian would bid farewell to them and go towards Gusu to be reunited with his husband.

Chapter End Notes

Next chapter: The Sunshot campaign.

Fifteen

Chapter Summary

Wei Ying makes grenades!!!

Chapter Notes

All war preparations are finally over. Unfortunately, Wei Ying and Lan Zhan cannot be together yet. They both have places to go and things to do.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

A prelude to war

Dear Hanguang-Jun,

I heard about the Lotus Pier. The war is finally here, eh? Er-ge ge, I worry for your safety. Please keep my husband safe and well. Your Wei Ying would be desolate otherwise.

I met an interesting pair of rogue cultivators. I will tell you all about it when we meet. I will be there in a week and I would be yours to do as you please, beloved.

I will be bringing my inventions to the Lan sect to help the alliance. You remember the problem I had faced two years back while making the Exploding device? I was not able to find the right ratio of yin and yang energy. I finally got it last year. Since then I have made as many as 2,000 exploding devices. They are filled with iron shards and held together with yin and yang energies. A cultivator just has to pass a little bit of yang energy to mess up the balance and throw it at the enemies. It will explode quickly and take out as many ten soldiers at once. The Lan sect is free to share these with others. And no one can attempt to break it without exploding it and endangering themselves. So, no one would be able to copy that.

I know I have said that I will not fight in the war and I am standing by that. Given the vast and overwhelming number of Wen cultivators, and given that there is no resentful energy being used, these devices will simply even out the odds for the alliance. But they still need to fight for what they want themselves. I will not be handing out a win for them this time. No one would appreciate the things that were handed out to them easily. It has to be hard earned.

Enough of this. I cannot wait to see you, my love. Eagerly waiting for our reunion.

Always yours

Wei Ying

—

Few days later, Wei Ying slipped into Cloud Recesses, late at night using his own jade token and directly went to the Jingshi. His husband was waiting for him. It had been months since they had met and Wei Ying had missed his Lan Zhan terribly. He knew Lan Zhan had missed him a lot too.

Wei Ying was hugged tightly by his husband, as soon as he entered the room.

“Wei Ying”. Lan Zhan called.

“Lan Zhan”. Wei Ying had answered. There was no more talk to be had after that.

That night, their love making was frantic. Even though they were experienced, even though they were powerful, nothing was certain in a war. And to add salt to the wound, they would not be fighting together, looking after each other in this war. They would be far apart and it would be impossible for them to help each other in case of any emergency. So, there was an urgency, some kind of desperation in the air as they reached out to each other.

Again and again, Lan Zhan fucked into his Wei Ying, his grip tight on Wei Ying's hips. And Wei Ying welcomed all of his husband's need to conquer and possess, for Wei Ying needed to belong to Lan Zhan. He wanted to submit to his Lan Zhan. So, he embraced his beloved, and took everything his husband offered him. It went on for the whole night. Wei Ying did not know how many times his husband brought him to his release. Their stomachs and their bedsheet was stained with his spent all through the night. Lan Zhan had filled his puckered

whole the whole night and now Wei Ying felt too full. And yet he craved for more.

The next morning Wei Ying woke up fresh and clean. At one point, his husband had bathed him and adorned him in clean robes. There was a fresh breakfast waiting for him at the table. But there was no Lan Zhan in sight.

Wei Ying sighed as he got up and ate the food prepared for him. His husband had even managed to find him the brand of chilli oil he always preferred. Utterly charmed, "How lovely, Lan Zhan", he muttered delightfully, "truly, er-ge ge. You are the best'.

Just as he finished eating, Lan Zhan entered Jingshi and Wei Ying flung himself on his husband. "Cruel of you to leave your husband alone, Hanguang-Jun. And after using me so thoroughly last night, how dare you discard your husband! Your Wei Ying is so anguished right now. He will perish with longing." Wei Ying threw dramatic accusations at Lan Zhan.

"Wei Ying enjoyed being used." Lan Zhan teased, his eyes bright golden with mirth and a slight smile on his lips.

"Ahh! Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan, so beautiful, so pretty, ge ge. Do not smile at others. They would want you for themselves and where would that leave your poor husband?"

"Mn. Wei Ying does not have to worry. Only Wei Ying makes me smile." Lan Zhan replied. And Wei Ying was utterly and thoroughly defeated.

“Aiya! What do I always say? Lan Zhan, you should tell me before you say such things. My poor heart cannot take it otherwise.”

Lan Zhan sat down holding Wei Ying on his lap without answering. They sat in silence, basking in each other's presence, knowing very well that such peaceful moments would be rare in the next few years.

—

“Greetings, Xichen-ge ”, Wei Wuxian bowed to the Lan. It was very near to lunch time and they were on their way to the dining hall.

“Greetings, Wuxian. How are you doing? And when did you come?” Lan Xichen asked.

“I came very late last night, Xichen-ge. Lan Zhan could not have informed you then. Sorry about breaking the curfew though.” Wei Wuxian answered sheepishly.

“I am sure Wangji was too busy to inform us, Wuxian”, Lan Xichen deliberately looked at several marks visible on Wuxian's neck.

Wei Wuxian blushed. “Aiya, do not tease me so, Xichen-ge.”

“But it is the privilege of older siblings to tease their younger brothers”, Xichen replied.

“Then you can tease Lan Zhan and spare me, Xichen-ge. I am too thin-skinned for this.” Wei Wuxian pleaded.

“I will let you go today. But no promises for the future.”

“Fine. Fine. Let us hurry up. I have things to share after lunch.”

“What is it?” Xichen was curious. Wei Wuxian always had brilliant ideas.

“I have bought something for you, a new invention of mine.” Wei Wuxian replied.

“Then let us make haste. Uncle is waiting.”

—

“Uncle Lan, this is the sample of the Exploding device I have invented. And this scroll here has the instructions on the safety hazards, on how to keep it safe, and on how to use it”. Wei Wuxian presented a device with the size and shape of an apple.

Lan Qiren read through the scroll and passed it to Lan Xichen.

“This is incredible, Wuxian.” Lan Xichen expressed.

“Indeed. What is your plan, Wuxian?” Lan Qiren asked.

“I have made around 2000 of these and I will be giving them all to the Lan sect. You can distribute these to your allies however you see fit. Don’t worry. No one will be able to steal the idea. You cannot open it without being harmed. This is my contribution since I will not be fighting in the war.” Wei Wuxian explained.

“Oh! What will you do if you do not fight in the war?” Lan Xichen asked.

“Xichen-ge, do you know who is the most impacted if war breaks out? It is the common people, those who actually have nothing to do with sect politics and powers. While all the

cultivators are fighting amongst themselves, there would be only few rogue cultivators like me who will help them. “

“Admirable, Wuxian.” Lan Qiren praised Wei Wuxian.

“One more thing. I would be cautious of the Jins if I were you.” Wuxian noted.

“Why? Jins are our allies. Surely, to suspect them is a great disservice”, Lan Xichen replied.

“Xichen-ge, Jins always had a good relationship with the Wens. The Lan sect was attacked, the Jiang sect was destroyed, and the Nie sect was impacted as well. The Jin sect was the only sect among the great sects that was not harmed in any way by the Wens. That is a concern and you should be wary about the possible implications. Even now, the Jin sect has not fully committed to being in your alliance. They are sitting on the fence. They would likely wait for sometime to observe which side is winning and then side with them.” Wei Wuxian explained.

“Wuxian, we cannot simply suspect our friends, that too a great sect. It would be against our rules too, to make assumptions and judgements without proof.” Lan Xichen said.

“Xichen-ge, your rules may work very well during peacetime. But this is war and lives are at stake. People are not always black and white. Just because the Lan sect has a rule not to lie, that does not mean others will not lie. Being cautious can save many lives. Being naive will not help anyone. Xichen-ge, you are the sect heir now. You will become a sect leader one day. Your action or inaction will have far reaching consequences. Your words or silences will have weight. Politics comes with lies and deception. Selfishness is human nature. Many people will be attracted to greed and power. You have to be prepared to deal with it. ” Wei Wuxian replied.

Sometimes, while talking to Wei Wuxian and Wangji, Lan Xichen would feel as though he was talking to a peerless master, an old soul. He felt as though their words always carried a lot of weight, an age old wisdom accumulated from the vicissitudes of life. Lan Xichen always wondered about it since they both were too young to have faced anything. Nonetheless, he also knew that listening to their words would only lead him to a better path.

“You are very wise, Wuxian. Thank You. I will reflect on what you said just now.” Lan Xichen bowed, “but now, do not keep my brother waiting. He is outside and I am sure he wants to spend time with you before we leave for Qinghe”.

A week went by fast and it was time for the Lans to join the war council at Qinghe. A lot of clans had joined the alliance and they were heading towards the Nei sect. Jin Zixuan had joined along with a small contingent of Jin army under his leadership. Jiang Wanyin had come with two of his bodyguards. Although some of the Jiang disciples who were away during the attack on Lotus Pier had also joined him, the Jiang numbers were pitifully low.

It was the day before Lan Zhan would travel to Qinghe, when Wei Ying was resting on Lan Zhan’s lap when he presented a set of twenty-five paintings to his husband.

“Lan Zhan, With Hua Meng and Liu Xin, these are ten rogue cultivators working with us right now. And these fifteen people are the merchants in our group. And here are the details of all these people”, Wei Ying then gave a series of booklets to Lan Zhan.

“Mn.”

“I am planning to use this network to promote my new talismans and also help the war torn villages. This is my newly developed token. It has a secret yin energy signature. No one can copy this and make a fake one. All the members of this network have similar tokens. I am giving one to you,” Wei Ying handed over a red jade token with a black rabbit etched over it.

“Wei Ying is ambitious, and always so kind. I am very proud. I will contact Wei Ying if I see someone in need of help”, Lan Zhan praised. Lan Zhan was amused to see a glorious red spreading across Wei Ying’s cheeks. In spite of all these years being together, Wei Ying was still moved by a genuine and honest compliment. His beloved Wei Ying would always be like a rock, and would never budge from his place even if the whole world cursed at him. But, offer a sincere word or a loving heart, one could see the softest and gentle most part of his being.

“*Lan Zhan...*” Wei Ying hissed, unable to hide his shyness, “you are a menace”.

“Mn.”

“Anyway, none of these people, apart from Li Bai Yi, knows that we are planning to help the common people of Qishan Wen too. So, if you see any Wens in need of help, contact only me or Li Bai Yi.” Wei Ying managed to talk through his blush.

“Mn,” Lan Zhan replied, stroking Wei Ying’s back, “Wei Ying should be careful.”

“You should take care of my husband too, Hanguang-Jun”. Wei Ying replied.

“Mn.”

There was a peaceful silence after that. For a long time, they just sat, indulging in each other’s closeness

After a while, “Lan Zhan, parting is always such a sorrow.” Wei Ying said with a sigh. The evening air near Jinshi was filled with melancholy.

“Mn”.

“But, the reunions are equally sweeter.”

“Mn.”

“Er-ge ge, I would miss you terribly.” Wei Ying whispered, pushing his face onto Lan Zhan’s chest.

“Will miss Wei Ying too.”

“When would you have to leave?”

“Tomorrow morning, after breakfast.”

“Then Lan Zhan, wake me up as soon as you do. I want to bid you goodbye, I want to hug you one last time, I want to kiss you one last time, for the memory of it would warm me when the night feels cold without you. I belong to you, er-ge ge. Without you, your Wei Ying will not have a home” Wei Ying said softly. This was Wei Ying in his raw and vulnerable self, a sight only Lan Zhan was allowed to see.

“ *Wei Ying* ” . Lan Zhan took a deep breath to calm himself. His hands trembled as he was holding Wei Ying in his arms. “ *Wei Ying...Wei Ying* ”, He said again and again. To be trusted so, to be allowed to know and perceive, to be loved so, Lan Zhan felt humbled.

“Oh, Lan Zhan”, Wei Ying sighed again, embracing Lan Zhan tightly to offer comfort, for he knew Lan Zhan very well too.

—

The next day, after many hugs and kisses, Wei Ying bid farewell to Lan Zhan. That the parting was temporary did not lessen the pain of loneliness.

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter: Our Yiling Laozu's journey through the war.

Sixteen

Chapter Summary

Wei Ying starts green revolution amidst Sunshot campaign.

Chapter Notes

So, I increased the chapter by one. There are two reasons for that.

One, I had to add some more content. Instead of adding this to an existing chapter, I created a new one, because of reason two.

Two, I did not want the total number of chapters to be a prime number.

There you go. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Chronicles of the war - Part 1

Dear Wei Ning,

I hope this letter finds you and your family in the best spirits. Is your Qing-jie still terrorising the Wei sect members? How is winemaking coming along? I do miss the Plum Blossom wine that uncle fourth sent last time. I am looking forward to tasting his new creation “Loquats and Orange Mist”. Ask him to reserve two bottles for me.

I am writing this letter in hope. I am in desperate need of your help. I know that you often used to travel across Qishan Wen lands in search of precious herbs and medicinal plants for your sister. Please send me a detailed map of all the villages and towns you have come across in your travels. That would help our team to access your people in need of help. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Your Wei-Xiong,

Wei Ying

Wei-Xiong,

I can of-course send you the map. However, it would not be as effective as a personal guide. As soon as I post this letter, I will be travelling to Qishan Wen. Two of my friends are coming with me as well. They know where most of the Wen soldier posts are and they would be able to help you to hide better. Do not worry, we have changed our appearance a bit and no one would recognise us. A-jie has also given permission, for she was worried about you.

We will meet you soon.

Your brother,

Wei Ning

—

Wei-Sanren,

We have received your talismans from the merchant here in town. As soon as we got the message from one of the shops in Caiyi, we travelled to the town of Hefei near the border of Jin land. The situation here is exactly as the message said. This town has been besieged by a sort of insect yao which preys on the root of the rice plants and barley stems. The farmers have been hit by these pests for a couple of years now and they are in a desperate situation since their livelihood has collapsed. The Jins did not respond to the call of help because there is no glory in helping the farmers apparently.

A lot of villages near this town have suffered and as much as ten thousand hectares of land has been affected. We have talked to the local magistrate here and we would be distributing your “Pest Kill” talismans and “Soil Fertilisation” talismans to all the farmers. Of course, we would do so in the name of Yiling Laozu.

We will be staying here for the next couple of months, in case you need to contact us.

Liu Xin sends his regards.

Your friend on the road,

Hua Meng

—

Dear brother-in-law,

Wang Li offers his solicitations. Your sister is doing well. Your nephews are growing to be rambunctious and giving us endless headaches. However this is much better than what otherwise would have been, a listless existence in the next few years, if the situation continued the same.

It is with a relieved heart that I am writing this letter.

As I had written in my last letter, there was a skirmish between the Wens and the Nie soldiers very close to our village. This was two months ago. Although we were able to save ourselves, thanks to the evacuation plan set up by Yiling Laozu, our fields were destroyed by all the residual Qi they used and all the resentment energy from the dead clinging to the soil. Our crops had withered to dead grass. And nothing would grow in this condition.

We thought, if the soldiers did not kill us accidentally, starvation would. Just as we were getting desperate, lo and behold, Yiling Laozu himself appeared in our village.

I had heard the rumours about the man. But nothing compares to meeting in real life. He is oh so charming and gentle. Always has a smile on his face, very respectful of elders and caring towards the children. Half of the girls in our village fell in love with him very quickly. For all that he has achieved, he is very young too.

Anyway, I digress. Yiling Laozu has used a few talismans on our land and now it is as good as before. Apparently, these are all his own inventions. All of us in the village are very grateful to him. We bid him farewell last night, and sent him off with a banquet honouring him.

Most importantly, I want to share with you what our Yiling Laozu has told us. According to him, anyone in need of help can go to any shop with a black rabbit signboard, and help would be delivered as soon as possible, be it farming issues or problems with any other livelihood. You can also reach out to them if you need help from a cultivator.

Do share this with everyone in your village and also talk to your magistrate.

Send me a letter to let me know how your family is doing these days. Your sister misses you as well.

Affectionately,

Wang Li

—

Respected Senior,

I am writing this letter in hope that you would be able to solve the problem our villages are facing.

Last year, a travelling salesman from your shop visited our village to sell a few farming talismans. Through him, we got to know about your establishment and your nature of work. Although those talismans were of great help, a new problem has risen. Two months back there was a small battle between the Wens and Yao sect cultivators. A whole mountain range of trees were destroyed. Now, the soil from those mountains have begun to downslide. We were originally a group of villages who grew herbs and medicinal plants on these mountains. Now we cannot grow anything because of this issue.

We have no other source of income and at this rate, we would be starving by next year. Please help.

Your hopeful servant,

Kang Ye

Kang Ye-gongzi,

We have received your request. Our supreme Yiling Laozu is working on a solution. You should be able to hear from us in a few weeks.

Till then,

Shopkeeper Yang

Kang Ye-gongzi,

We have good news. Our lord, Yiling Laozu, has managed to create a self-sustaining array to prevent soil erosion. A pair of rogue cultivators would be visiting your village to install this.

We would request you to notify all the villages in the vicinity of this issue, so that they can contact these rogue cultivators for the solution.

Please contact us in case you need any other help.

Till then,

Shopkeeper Yang

—

Supreme Yiling Laozu,

Greetings from this humble magistrate of An Hui. This is to bring your notice to some issues we are facing in our province. In the past couple of years, we have been facing extreme heat during summer and extreme cold during winter. Even during our planting season we are facing weather issues - not enough sun or too much heat, not enough rain or too much rain that washes away the plants - in the last few years. Due to this our yield has gone down considerably.

Sadly, we cannot reduce the grain tax we send to our affiliated sects, unless we want to face the wrath of those cultivators. In fact, as early as last monsoon season, our taxes were doubled, especially grains, vegetables, spices, and all the food related produce. If this continues, we would not be able to sustain ourselves for long.

We are in need of your assistance. Please help our villages.

Respectfully,

Magistrate Peng Yao

Magistrate Peng Yao,

Greetings from Yiling Laozu. I have been hearing about this problem from many places now. Uncertain climate changes and problems with the weather pattern is the result of this long standing war. A tremendous amount of spiritual energy is being released during battles and the residual qi is spreading across the land along with the resentment energy of the dead. This has caused an imbalance in nature. If left otherwise, nature will correct itself, no doubt. But this would take a long time, decades even.

I have been working on this for a few months now and I have come up with four or five ideas to correct the problem. But I need to personally visit the affected place and try some experiments. Do let me know if any family is ready to host me for a couple of months for me to try out a few things in their field. If this works, then that would be the end of all your problems.

With best wishes,

Yiling Laozu

Zhi Xing,

You will not believe what I am about to say. Do you remember our magistrate, Peng Yao? Yes, the same one who tried to marry his daughter to my nephew. He came to our house two months back and he wanted us to host The Yiling Laozu himself! I mean, at first I thought this was some sort of sick joke because we refused to accept his marriage proposal. But no, he actually wanted us to host such an august person. At first I declined. What if we somehow offend this revered cultivator? But when I got to know the reason why Yiling Laozu wanted a place to stay, I could not say no.

Yiling Laozu stayed with us for two months. For such a high profile person, he was very down-to-earth. He ate what we prepared, slept in the room we offered. He never demanded anything. In fact, he even assisted my wife in her household chores. I always knew Yiling Laozu was a great man, for he has done a lot of great things. But in the last two months I also realised that he is a good man, a decent person.

Now, you might want to ask what he did in those two months. Well, he asked us to build a barn in our field. No, no. Do not laugh. I am not joking. At first, I was flabbergasted as to what the purpose was. But later on I saw that he was doing some sort of experiments with his arrays. In the end, he called the whole family and showed what he had worked on.

I would not believe my eyes when I entered the barn. These cultivators surely are very powerful, I tell you. The entire barn was climate controlled, Yiling Laozu explained. The whole barn is under the control of the array. And using a few talismans, you can control the temperature, humidity, and other conditions. With that, you can grow any crop you want inside the barn and it does not matter what the weather is outside. Isn't it great?

You also contact your magistrate and ask him to write to Yiling Laozu.

Your friend,

Chen Bao

—

Dear Li Bai Yi,

How are you? Is your family doing well? In the last letter you said your son is travelling now too, helping you with your work. Now, that is a very filial boy you have, Mr. Merchant. I heard he is very handsome. Of course, he would not be as handsome as my Lan-er-ge ge. But you know that is my bias speaking. Love makes all of us fools and I happy to be one.

I heard your Caiyi is doing much well in spite of the war. I am glad. I hope your family stays safe. Now, you all take proper care while travelling.

Last time we met, we talked about venturing into Qishan Wen to help their people. But we need to take every precaution for that. I am not planning on involving other rogue cultivators in this task. However, my brother Wei Ning and his two friends will be working with us. You also select a few people you absolutely trust.

We need to maintain what we are doing a secret and we should make sure our identities are not revealed to anyone. For that I have developed a new talisman. You can sew these talismans into your clothes. This talisman will distort and slightly blur your face and the other person will not be able to know who you are. Make sure you all wear non-descriptive clothes. Unfortunately, this talisman will last only for a day. So, you need to stock them up when you go to Qishan Wen.

You can also use this talisman to hide the faces of the rescued family as well.

Give my regards to your family.

Affectionately,

Wei Wuxian

Respected Wei-Sanren,

I hope you are doing well on your travels. I am sending two bottles of Emperor's Smile to you with this letter. My wife always worries that you do not eat much and she commented that you have become very thin the last time you visited our house. That is the reason there is a huge package of various cakes and confectionaries too.

My son, Li Ming has his own team now and will be travelling into Jin land tomorrow. He sends his regards too. He is waiting to play chess with you the next time you both meet.

The other important news that I have is that I have tested your hiding talisman. It lasted for a day as you mentioned. As you had mentioned, I also tested it with various cloth materials and different weather conditions, especially when the clothes are wet, and everything works perfectly fine. Even my close friends and relatives could not identify me when I was in front of them.

All in all, we are ready, I would say. Hopefully we will be able to help a lot of people.

With regards,

Merchant Li Bai Yi

—

Wen Shen,

I got your letter. I know your concerns. But I am not ready to move out of my ancestral home. Our lineage has been living in this house for more than five hundred years now. I will not be the one to tear down our ancestral hall and relocate our elders' memorial plaques from their resting place.

And do you even know who these people are? How do you know they will do as they claim and take you out of Qishan Wen? How do you know they will not sell you all for profit? I am very sceptical of a group who does not show their face and whose identity we do not know.

Moreover, I do not think we are in any danger in our own land. I know what Wen Ruohan is doing is wrong and these cultivators from the alliance are rightfully angry as our Wen sect. But, I do believe in their righteousness and that they will not do any harm to innocents. I do not have blood in my hands. And no one in my family has participated in the war. I do believe your fears are baseless.

In any case, I know it is futile to try to change your mind. You can go ahead with your plan. I swear by our friendship that I will not tell anyone about this.

Your friend,

Wen Chang

Dear Wen Chang,

Do not be delusional. Have you not heard of cutting the grass and eliminating the root? They will erase everyone with the name Wen if they win the war.

I do not think you have realised how much hatred there is towards the Wen name. Just yesterday, I heard that one of the Wen village settlements was destroyed by the cultivators from the Jiang sect. They did not spare anyone, not even elderly and women. They did not care if the people they were killing were non-cultivators and never participated in the war. Fortunately, they were able to send out all the children with few able bodied women. Otherwise, that despicable Jiang Wanyin and his cultivators would not have hesitated to kill them too.

Trust me on this and come with us. I believe in our rescuers, even if I do not know who they are. At least, this is better than getting slaughtered by these hateful cultivators. With this there is a chance for survival.

Or at least send all the children from your family with us. If miraculously, everything is fine, they can always come back to their home. In the worst case, your lineage will live on, even if their root is cut off. Think about it. You have a week to decide.

Your friend,

Wen Shen

—

Wei-Xiong,

Wen Shen's family was successfully rescued. They have been relocated to a small village near the border of the Jin lands. Now they go by the family name Mu.

It was a thrilling adventure, I will tell you this. It was a very close call this time. As we were nearing the town of Wuhu, somehow, we encountered a few Wen soldiers on patrolling duty. And they tried to rob us! That is because we were pretending to be a young master's family with a lot of money. But luckily we had Wei Qionglin with us. He immediately asked our team to take the Wen family away to safety. And then we both used your exploding devices to kill all of those Wen soldiers. Fortunately, none of us were hurt.

On the way back, I heard many people talking about one Hanguang-Jun. At first I was confused. How come I never knew about this powerful cultivator? Guess what? It was your Lan Er-gongzi. He has become famous now. I heard many of the maidens have lost their heart to this peerless man and are dedicating a lot of poems to him openly. If I were you, I would be careful and hide my man.

With regards

Li Ming

Li Ming, you brat,

Now you are teasing your Wei-Xiong! I will not take it easy on you when we play chess next. And what is this Jin cultivator I am hearing about? You have taken a fancy to her, your father said to me in his last letter. Tell me how your courting is going on? Come on, don't be shy. Share everything with your Wei-da ge. I have a lot of experience in this department. After all, I did manage to win the heart of the most beautiful man ever to live on this earth.

Anyway, I am glad you all are safe. We are almost done with this mission, I guess. But we will keep our eyes and ears open, just in case we missed some people. But for now, you should clean up all your traces and take some rest. I feel that the war is coming to an end soon.

Send my greetings to your parents.

With regards

Wei Wuxian

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter - Letters to husband - Part 2

Seventeen

Chapter Summary

War update!

Chapter Notes

I was supposed to update the chapter yesterday. But I had to go out to finish some work. It is monsoon season where I am staying and it had rained non-stop for more than a month. I had not seen the Sun for more than a month now. Only yesterday, there was sunlight for literally two minutes. That's it! But luckily the rain had stopped for a while and I went out to quickly finish my work!

How is the weather where you are staying?

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Chronicles of the war - Part 2

Age: 18 years

Dear Lan Zhan,

How are you, darling? I have missed you terribly all these days, my love.

I received your letter quite early today. But I was busy helping a farmer in his fields and I could only read it now, as I am laying down on the bed carefully laid out by the farmer's wife. She is a formidable woman, who brought up five kids and now she is expecting to be a grandmother. There is much to be learned from everyone here. Although these people are humble, they are hardworking, kind, and they will share what they have with others without any reservation. They have welcomed me into their homes and they have given me dinner made lovingly by the lady of the house. I feel content.

You said Nie Mingjue killed Wen Xu just like last time. A well earned milestone for the alliance, then. I am also glad to know that exploding devices are well used and are being helpful.

Beloved, I have been through a few villages ravaged by war. Although people were safe, their fields were destroyed in the fight. I distributed my "Soil Cleansing" talismans to the villagers

to re-enable the land for agriculture as soon as possible. Otherwise it would take a lot of years in the natural course of time. I am planning to distribute this through the trade network across regions. Along with that, I have found that the talismans to protect the crop from insects and talismans to fertilise the soil are also very helpful for the farmers to regain their livelihood faster.

I will be near the Qinghe region soon. Come with me for a night hunt, love, at least for one night.

Hoping to meet you soon.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age: 18 years

Dear Hanguang-Jun,

Our reunion was too brief, er-ge ge. But it was fun night hunting with you. I hope we get to do this again, soon.

And what is this soup incident I have been hearing about? Do not tell me that it is what I think it is. The gossip has reached even the remote place I am staying at. People are talking about Jiang-guniang in a bad light. They all believe Jin Zixuan's accusations. I do not know what Jiang Wanyin was thinking. No, I take that back. I do know what he was thinking. Right now the Jiang sect is in a precarious position. For now, everyone is a friend. But once the war is over, they will look out for their own interests. Given the notoriety of the Jiang Wanyin, his not so impressive performance in the war, and lack of any major contribution from the Jiang disciples, Jiang sect would not be receiving much war reparations. And I hear that not many new disciples are joining Yunmeng Jiang. It is not far reaching to think that Yunmeng Jiang will not remain a great sect after the war. Jiang Wanyin needs to bow down to the Jins. He needs to continue to be their ally even after the war. Hence, he must have refused to ask for any explanation from Jin Zixuan and thus no one cleared the misunderstanding. I feel pity for Jiang-guniang, for her reputation was not restored.

It is unbecoming not to stand up against unfair accusations and unjust actions. That is all I have to say.

Looking forward to your letters while dreaming of your beautiful self...

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age: 19 years

Pretty ge-ge,

Did you know someone proposed to me? She was very cute too. Now, do not pout, er-ge ge. She was only six years old, a chubby little radish. But I had to crush her heart and refuse her. I told her that a very pretty ge-ge is waiting for me and I can only marry him. Aiya! The tears that followed were so heartbreaking. It took more than an hour of coaxing for her to calm down. I had to playact a horse, a donkey, and a radish to placate her. But, I will tell you this. The next day I introduced her to Li Ming and she promptly lost her heart to him. It was funny to see him running away from her.

I heard from the Wei sect recently. They have settled well. People are slowly coming to them for healing. They have established a trade connection with several towns. Their fruit wines and carpentry work have gained some fame. There were a few additions to the sect through weddings and births.

I do have very good news. Wen Yuan, ah no, Wei Yuan was born last week. I was told that the mother is doing fine and the baby was born very healthy. It was bittersweet, beloved, to hear that. I would miss our little radish, sad to be not part of his life. But I am also happy that he would grow with his parents, away from the horrors of war. His childhood will be filled with love and happiness, unlike last time. As parents, this is all we wish for our child, for them to lead a happy and healthy life, isn't it? We can still be part of his life after the war is over.

I am looking forward to our next reunion, Lan er-ge-ge.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age: 20 years

Dear Hanguang-Jun,

You mentioned Meng Yao in your last letter. Is he still spying for the alliance? Let him be. He did not meet Xichen-ge this time and he did not save him. There is no personal connection between them. And Nie Mingjue never liked him. Without your brother's support, I do not think Meng Yao would gain power and status like last time. There would be no sworn brotherhood. Even if his father accepts him into the sect and gives him a legal name, without any further use, he would be set aside. There is no resentful energy cultivation for him to chase.

Without the endorsement of people in power, the cultivation world will not allow a son of a prostitute or a son of a servant for that matter to amass power and status. I still remember. In our last life, the cultivation world let Jiang Wanyin, a sect leader commit atrocities,

unchecked. But they were quick to condemn Meng Yao. I know Meng Yao deserved the punishments for his crimes. But, the hypocrisy of all still astounds me to some level.

So, let him do what he wants to do. We would be prepared for any eventuality.

Lan Zhan, I will be leaving for the villages near Yiling tomorrow. Hopefully, we will get to meet soon.

Always Yours

Wei Ying

Age: 21 years

Dear Lan Zhan,

It has been a few years since the war started. In the last timeline, the war had already ended by now. But this time it would drag on for more years, I am afraid. I can already see the beginning of food scarcity and the destroyed economy. The sects have started to collect exorbitant taxes to fund their war.

But fortunately I was able to finish my inventions at the right time. Li Bai Yi and his team of merchants have helped me distribute talismans and arrays to promote agriculture and faster yields.

Li Bai Yi and his team have done a great job. All the rogue cultivators were of immense help. More and more people are joining this cause. They have volunteered to spread these new agricultural talismans and practices across regions. Few more rogue cultivators have joined our team and contributed a lot.

Lan Zhan, I am so happy to be able to do this. Thank you, beloved. It would not have been possible without your constant support. How lucky I am to have you in my life! I love you. I do not say this enough. But, it is true. I am hopelessly in love with you.

Always Yours

Wei Ying

Age: 21 years

Dear Husband,

People have started calling you Hanguang-Jun now and deservedly so. Because you are the light that shines on everyone, my dear. Not just for everyone, but even for me. You were my guiding light even in my darkest. And why not? You have a beautiful soul, darling, with so much love to give. You are intelligent, kind, gracious, humble, deadly with your sword, unrivalled in musical cultivation, and so, *so* pretty, er-ge ge. But they do not know you are also humorous and tease your husband a lot. And I would like to keep this side of yours only to myself, my love.

Even at the remote corners of this world, people are talking about how you help wherever is needed, in between your war duties, despite how tired you must be. People talk about you in reverence, in awe, much like your humble husband.

I did not know fate was so funny, my love. People have started calling me Yiling Laozu. I do not know how they came to know that I am the lost child of Yiling. All the villages I have been to and every place I go, they have been addressing me as such. Even in this life we are still Hanguang-Jun and Yiling Laozu.

I escaped a bunch of Wen soldiers yesterday, it was a close call. Do not worry your pretty little head over dear old me. No one can capture me if I do not want to when shadows dance for my tune. But I would not say no to you, my love. Hanguang-Jun can capture this Yiling Laozu and hold him as his prisoner anytime he wants. What do you think, huh?

All these years the Jin Guangshan and Wen Ruohan wanted to capture me or entice me to join their clans. But they have never succeeded. Right now they do not know that Yiling Laozu and Wei Wuxian are the same people, they have not made the connection. But once they know, you will be in danger, my love, for everyone knows Wei Wuxian is madly in love with the Second Jade of Lan. So, please be careful. I heard that the Exploding devices are also attributed to Yiling Laozu. I do not know how that happened. I am sure even though your uncle and brother know the truth, they have not shared it with everyone. Anyway, the truth cannot be hidden for long.

How about we go for a night hunt near Yiling? You said you will be recapturing Lotus Pier next week. Come on, er-ge ge. Grace your husband with your lovely presence and spoil him for a bit.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age: 22 years

Dear Hanguang-jun,

You said Jin Guangshan had decided to fully participate in the war with the alliance. With the full support of the Jins, the burden on the alliance would be eased. And once the war ends,

everyone would be on equal footing, for the Jins would also lose their resources and wealth just like everyone else. The Jins would not be able to become the leaders this time. This is good news.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age: 24 years

Dear Husband,

I already miss you and I saw you just last week. The marks you had left on me have started to fade and I feel lonely without them. All these days, I would touch them in the dark of the night and feel the pain. Then I would touch myself seeking release thinking about you, how you held me down and drove into me again and again, took me apart and then put me back together. But after, I would still feel incomplete and unsatisfied because you were not there.

Soon the war will be over and we can reunite.

Always yours

Wei Ying

Age: 24 years

Dear Lan Zhan,

I am glad to know that Wen Ruohan was defeated. The war has finally ended. But our work is not yet over. Now, we need to concentrate on rebuilding.

Do you remember the project we had planned? Well, it is done now. The Wen Shen family was the last family to have been relocated. It was the timely message from you that we were able to save them. It was a close call too.

We need to thank Li Bai Yi and his merchant friends for this again. You were so glad that he managed to pull in a few of his fellow merchants and all their trade chains. And I am so gratified to see a lot of rogue cultivators who have joined our cause and helped us in many ways. With this, we have managed to smuggle most of the common people surnamed Wen, like women, children, elderly, and those who did not want to be part of the war, and rehabilitated them across various places. Of course, they all had to change their names and our merchant friends were able to provide necessary documents. Some of them even joined

the Wei sect. Some became part of the merchant chain themselves, offering help. Some settled as farmers and shopkeepers. Unfortunately, many people did not want to move at all, adamant till the end. They did not understand the gravity of the situation. But we cannot save someone who does not want to be saved and that was that.

It went just like we had planned, didn't it? We started this slowly many years back so as not to draw the attention of the sect leader, Wen Ruohan. But as the time went on, he started concentrating more on the war, and we were able to do this on a bigger scale.

Lan Zhan, you have been a part of this for a long time. Despite being busy with war, you have helped these people relocate, you have guarded them in their journey, you have notified our network whenever you found innocent Wens in your war expedition so that we could save them. We have done our best, beloved. Now everything is up to the sects to decide on what to do with the remaining Wen cultivators.

In everything, you have supported me so much, my love. I know there are no “sorry” and “thank you” between us. And yet, I cannot express my love and gratitude enough.

Lan Zhan, I just looked at the date today. It is funny how the war ended at this juncture in time. I remember I died in my first life at the same time. Darling, do not feel bad. It is all in the past. I am fine and alive now.

In any case, I get to see you anytime I want now. Er-ge ge, I cannot wait to see your beautiful self.

Always yours

Wei Ying.

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter - Appearance of our favourite Jin!!!

Eighteen

Chapter Summary

Our favourite Jin is here.

Chapter Notes

Everyone, our favourite Jin is of course Jin Zixun! Who else did you guys think?

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Aftermath of the war

It took at least five years to come out of the effects of the war, for the economy to stabilise, and for people to prosper.

The first order of business as soon as Wen Ruohan was killed was to have a discussion conference to address the next steps. There was no banquet hosted by the Jin sect since they were poor and in lack of resources this time. They did not plan to hold any Phoenix Mountain Hunt as well. In fact, all the sects at this time were devoid of resources and their coffers empty because the war had lasted for many years. This placed everyone on an equal level.

So, it was decided that the sects would return to their land, tend to their wounded, rest, and regroup. After a month, they would hold a discussion conference at the Nightless city, with all the sects contributing to the funds for it equally.

First Discussion conference after the war

Wei Wuxian decided to attend the conference along with the Lans. By then everyone had come to know that Wei Wuxian and Yiling Laozu were one and the same and the Jins were not happy that their net could not catch the fat fish.

On the first day, the discussion was on how to treat the remaining Wens. Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji suggested to Lan Xichen that they can let go of civilians and non-cultivators. And they can seal the core of the cultivators who had participated in the war permanently. They could be absorbed into the sects and can be used to rebuild their sects, instead of just killing them or keeping them in prisons. Wei Wuxian suggested that only war criminals should be punished severely, and not everyone. Lan Xichen and Lan Qiren presented this idea, and everyone had to agree. At present, the Lans and Nies had a slight upper hand due their immense contribution to the war compared to other sects. And no sect had the resources to handle the remaining Wens and maintain war prisons. The method proposed by Lan Xichen was practical and an easy way out.

On the second day, they talked about the War reparations. Most of the riches went to the Lan sect and the Nie sect as they had contributed the most in the war. Hanguang-Jun had killed the biggest threat, Wen Zhuliu, Lan Xichen had killed Wen Chao, and Nie Mingjue had killed Wen Xu. Even in the battle, the Lan and Nie disciples had come out strongly being very skilled with their weapons. Next were the Jins, and they had to be satisfied being the third best. The Jiang sect contributions were the least among the great sects. Jiang Wanyin and his disciples came out very poorly from this war, almost at the bottom of the ladder, for even minor clans performed better than the Jiangs. Only the legacy of the previous generations and the prestige it had acquired previously would keep them afloat for some time. So, they did not receive much in terms of reparations.

On the third day, they decided on how to distribute the land of Qishan Wen across all the sects. Again, the major parts of the land went to the Lans and the Nies, followed by the Jins, and then the minor sects. The Jiang sect did not get any. Given that they were poor now, maintaining just Yunmeng Jiang was a tedious task. All these days, people avoided Jiang Wanyin like a plague. His displays of temper tantrums and his poison filled words towards everyone, especially against the Lans and Wei Wuxian, kept everyone away.

There was a banquet arranged on the fourth day to relax after a long running war. It was also an opportunity to further political ties and to build relationships. Wei Wuxian attended the dinner as Lan Wangji's companion. He wore black robes with under layering of red robes, made from finest silks, and lovingly gifted by his husband. Instead of his signature ponytail, Lan Wangji had combed his hair in a Lan style using a silver guan complimenting his silver eyes. He looked ethereal with a hint of wickedness in his eyes and Lan Wangji was tempted.

That night, it was not Wei Wuxian who attended the dinner, but Yiling Laozu in all his glory. And Hanguang-Jun was thoroughly and utterly seduced. Lan Zhan was hungry, wanting to consume his beloved like an elaborate and decadent meal. Wei Ying looked extravagant in those elaborate robes he was wearing. There was a hint of his chest exposed to the eyes of others and Lan Zhan longed to trace the sliver of that skin with his tongue, bite and leave a mark there so that everyone knew that Wei Ying belonged to him.

He kept a proprietary hand around Wei Ying's waist, staking a claim and making his possession known to everyone. Every once in a while Wei Ying would lean on Lan Zhan, with knowing glances and smiles filled with unspoken promises. This was an age-old mating dance, and Lan Zhan waited for his prey like the hunter he was.

Lan Zhan stuck close to his husband all through the night, much to his uncle's exasperation and his brother's amusement. For the most part of the banquet, they both were able to keep it to themselves, indulging in each other's company. Only two incidents caused minor disturbances. One was Jin Guangshan asking Wei Wuxian to join the Jin Sect and the other was Sect leader Yao asking Jin Guangshan to reinstate the engagement between Jin Zixuan and Jiang Yanli. Both of them did not come to fruition. There was also a small thing with Jin Zixun, but no one cared about him.

"Yiling Laozu, Wei Wuxian, you have been hiding deeply. None of us could find you before." Jin Guangshan commented.

"Oh! But, everyone knows I am *very, very* close to Lan Zhan here, as you can see for yourself. You could have sent me a message through Hanguang-Jun." Wei Wuxian answered politely.

"Is that so? I am curious to know why you did not help in the war. Everyone thinks you are very gifted."

"Sect leader Jin, Did Lan sect not share my Exploding devices with all of you? Where did the notion that I did not help in the war come from? All of us have done our part, I am sure. And now that the war is over, we all should strengthen our ties to prosper together. Sect leader Jin, I am sure your intelligent self will recognise that someone wants to sow discord and break the alliance for their selfish purposes. They want us to fight amongst ourselves so that they can reap the benefits alone and be the next Wen Ruohan. Surely, your esteemed self would have recognised that." Wei Wuxian replied.

“Wei Ying has been helping the common people and helping promote the agricultural economy, irrespective of the sects. It has been a boon during the war and all the sects have benefited from this. It was because of his efforts that we did not have food scarcity during the war. Otherwise, many of us would have died of hunger.” Hanguang-Jun interjected. That was the most anyone ever heard of him talking.

“Indeed, Yiling Laozu’s contribution cannot be neglected. And he was kind enough not to ask for any compensation for that.” Nie Mingjue said.

“Of course. Now that the war is over, Wei Wuxian, how about you join the Jin sect. You would be given a higher position, you could become the right hand man of my son Jin Zixuan. At the Jin sect you can get all the riches and as many women as you want. No one will stop you.” Jin Guangshan offered.

Riches? Ha! Wei Wuxian thought in his mind. Right now the Jins were as poor as any other sect. If at all, Wei Wuxian would have been the richest man in this room for all the talismans and arrays he had sold. But he had given away most of it to help rebuild the villages.

“Pardon me, sect leader Jin. I have decided to be a rogue cultivator in the honour of my deceased parents who were rogue cultivators themselves. This is my filial piety to them. As far as women are concerned, most of my peers here know that I am in love with the Second Jade of Lan.” Wei Wuxian took Lan Wangji’s hand and kissed it in front of everyone. And that was the end of it. Jin Guangshan could not get across filial piety. And he did not have enough say to make other sects force this issue on Wei Wuxian.

Soon after, Sect leader Yao raised a toast to Jin Guangshan and suggested that Jin Zixuan and Jiang Yanli be betrothed on the account that their mothers were close friends and sworn sisters. This would bring in new beginnings after the disastrous war and a wedding would cheer everyone up, Sect leader Yao said. Everyone present there knew it was not the Sect leader asking this, but the young Jiang sect leader using someone else to further his interests. Both Jin Guangshan and Jin Zixuan rejected the proposal.

Wei Wuxian was quite surprised at that. Because last time it was Jiang Yanli who rejected the proposal and as far as he knew, Jin Zixuan had already liked Jiang Yanli by then.

“Lan Zhan, what is this? What a turn of events this is! In any case, Jiang-guniang is totally unsuited to the environs of the Jins. I mean, she did come to the battlefield alone. Were there no Jin to guard a new widow and the mother of the Jin sect heir? Good riddance, I would say. Now she can marry into a less complicated family and live a good life.” Wei Ying whispered.

“Mn”. Lan Zhan caressed Wei Ying’s back.

“But, why is the peacock not in love with Jiang Yanli?” Wei Wuxian leaned into his husband for warmth. As fashionable as his robes were, they were a bit impractical for the cold weather of the night.

“Last time Wei Ying was the catalyst”. Lan Zhan whispered back.

“Ah! I got it. I was what Nie Huaisang calls, a cannon fodder in their love story, wasn’t I? Every time he messed up, I had always defended her in front of him, talking at length about her qualities and how good she was. He must have been slightly influenced by that. And I had raised a ruckus to make sure her name was cleared in the soup incident. That would have made him feel very guilty at that time and that made him notice her more and more, and then he started liking her. But this time the misunderstanding was never cleared. Or even if it was cleared, it was much later. The heat of that moment would have greatly reduced and thus the intensity of the guilt too. It would have been one of the many insignificant incidents in the long running war. And with no Phoenix mountain hunt, there was no reason for them to meet again.” Wei Wuxian analysed.

“Mn.” Lan Zhan pulled Wei Ying impossibly closer.

“Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan, how about I start writing romantic plays. I think I will be quite good at it. And you can compose and write songs for the play. Isn’t this a great idea? Eh, Lan Zhan? We could be a pair of playwright and a musician roaming the land in search of new love stories. Wouldn’t that be wonderful?” Wei Ying was very excited. This was a brilliant idea.

“As Wei Ying wishes. “ Lan Zhan agreed.

“Oh! Lan Zhan. You are too good for me. You pamper me so much. I am the luckiest husband in this whole world.” Wei Ying gently patted his husband’s cheek.

“Wei Ying is wrong. He is not the luckiest.”

“Eh?”

“I am the luckiest husband.” Lan Zhan replied with a slight twinkle of gold in his eyes. Wei Ying of course noticed his husband’s teasing.

“ *Lan Zhan* ”, Wei Ying hissed, “not now! Not in front of everyone! Shameless!” he whispered, his face flushed with a lovely shade of red. Lan Zhan could only look at him, mesmerised.

As every love story has a villain, just like a cannon fodder, Jin Zixun interrupted their lovely moment.

“Yiling Laozu, I heard a lot about skills with your sword. How about you spar with me so that everyone can witness your prowess.” Jin Zixun talked down to Wei Wuxian. Clearly he was there to insult Wei Wuxian. This was another classist who thought he was better than others.

“Who are you?” Wei Wuxian asked. He genuinely did not remember him.

“Hundred holes curse” Lan Zhan murmured.

“Ah! Now I know. Thanks, Lan Zhan”. Wei Ying whispered back.

“Don’t you know my name?” Jin Zixun shouted. This made everyone in the hall pay attention to him. A curious few cultivators came to where they were to see what the commotion was all about.

“Pardon me, gongzi. I have never met you before. By your clothes I can only surmise that you are a Jin cultivator. You see, if it was Nie Mingjue, I would still know him - even if I have never met him before - because of his skills and the fact that he killed Wen Xu. Similarly, people know Hanguang-Jun and Zewu-Jun for their exploits. But I have never heard of any Jin cultivator. Of course, I never participated in war and I was quite far to hear any accolades. I know it is a bit shameful to praise our own deeds. So, Instead of asking you, I would ask all the others present here to let me know who this esteemed cultivator is and what are his achievements. This way, next I will not be ignorant and insult this fine gentleman.” Wei Wuxian bowed to all the nearby cultivators in all seriousness, as though he genuinely did want to know about this Jin cultivator and correct his mistakes. Only Lan Zhan could see his silver eyes flashing with mirth.

There was a moment of silence as none of them knew who this Jin cultivator was. But they could clearly make out that this was just an empty shell making noise. They all could hear a couple of titters which were suppressed quickly.

“You..you” Jin Zixun started to point his fingers at Wei Wuxian in rage.

“Ah! Jin-gongzi, pardon this humble person. I genuinely did want to know more about you so that I can offer proper respect to your praise worthy self.” Wei Wuxian then bowed to Lan Qiren, and asked “Uncle Lan, did I commit any faux pas? I am just a rogue cultivator who grew up on the streets. I am afraid I must have insulted this person with my uncouth ways. Whatever shall I do now, uncle?” This was said by a person who could be a charming gentleman when he wants to be and the master of six arts. His husband was so funny, Lan Zhan thought fondly.

Lan Qiren was speechless. Lan Xichen coughed to hide his laughter. Jin Zixuan hid his face in his hands. Nie Huaisang opened his fan to cover his grin. Jiang Wanyin was angry as always. Only Nie Mingjue laughed out loud. And Wei Ying looked on as if he was still in confusion much to the amusement of Lan Zhan.

“Sit down, Jin Zixun. That is quite enough. Do not bring shame to the sect”, Jin Guangshan scolded him in front of everyone.

His Wei Ying was brilliant, Lan Zhan thought. By asking everyone around him to introduce Jin Zixun and them having failed to do so, no one could blame Wei Ying for insulting the Jin sect. If they blamed Wei Ying, they had to blame all the others too and that would be a disaster that Jin Guangshan will never court.

With that pantomime, the banquet was over and everyone dispersed to their respective rooms.

In this way, the first of the many discussion conferences came to an end. They would be held again after a year, and every year thereafter. For now, all the sects went back to rebuild their sects and every sect was left to themselves.

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter - An end of sorts! Or a new beginning?

Nineteen

Chapter Summary

An End and a new beginning

Chapter Notes

Apologies for the delay. I had a family emergency.

We are at the end of this story. Only one more chapter is left. Enjoy...

I was not able to read all the comments till now. I will be doing it soon.

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

Discussion conference- Five years later

This time the discussion conference was held in the Lan sect. Wei Ying and Lan Zhan had just arrived at Jinshi. They had been roaming the land with a donkey, just like Wei Ying had dreamed. In between helping his brother and uncle to rebuild the Lan sect, Lan Zhan true to his name would travel with Wei Ying, vanquishing demons and saving people. And Yiling Laozu would help the farmers, traders, and other occupations to help recover the destroyed economy. Their name was spread far and wide. A pair of lovers, one who would offer comfort and safety to the weak, with his steadfast nature and the other who would offer warmth and hope to the downtrodden with his kindness. Sun and moon, they would whisper. They were the symbols of prosperity and progress, something which people desperately needed after a disastrous war.

Wei Ying and Lan Zhan never wanted to marry this time. They were already married anyway and they did not want to go through it once again. So, they roamed as a pair of cultivation partners. They had met a lot of rogue cultivators in their travels.

They had met Luo Qingyang a few months back. She had left the Jin sect because she finally could not take Jin Guangshan's lecherous ways anymore. She was courting Li Ming, Li Bai Yi's son and they were planning to get married next year. They would make a nice pair, Wei

Ying thought. Li Bai Yi was an outstanding man and had helped Wei Ying a lot all these years and his son was equally good. Wei Yin already had an idea for a pair of bracelets as a wedding gift, which would safeguard them from resentful creatures.

Fortunately Wei Wuxian had managed to meet his marital uncle Xiao Xingchen and his companion Song Lan in this timeline and helped them capture Xue Yang. He had suggested that they take the prisoner directly to the Nie sect for a trial. Nie Mingjue had immediately executed Xue Yang after his crimes were proved to be true. Later, with the intention of following their goals, Xiao Xingchen and Song Lan had found a piece of land they were looking for to start their own sect. Wei Wuxian had suggested the nearby area of the Wei sect as there was a lot of uncharted land on that side of the world. Both the Wei sect and the Chenlan sect got along very well and supported each other in times of need. Both sects had taken in a lot of war orphans from the street according to the suggestion of Wei Wuxian. All the major sects were hit very hard by the war and there were not many bloodline disciples to carry forward the traditional set up. Wei Wuxian made use of this power vacuum to promote merit based sects. The Wei sect and the Chenlan sect were the pioneers of this new change. Soon, within a few decades, these changes would take a deep root in the land and many more such sects would come into existence. In order to help these new sects, Wei Wuxian would build several libraries and make sure the knowledge was distributed across people. With time, these old school sects would slowly fade into oblivion, just as Wei Wuxian intended.

With these intentions in mind, Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji were planning to visit the Wei sect and Chenlan sect after this conference. They also wanted to see Wei Yuan and make sure that he is growing up happily. And then they would stay with Xiao Xingchen and Song Lan to help build their new sect.

—

Wei Ying sighed as he was lying on his Lan Zhan's chest and listening to his steady heartbeat. It was quite late in the night and the Jinshi was filled with the mellow moonlight through the window, although the softness of the silver rays was not comparable to the gentle way Lan Zhan caressed his back.

“Lan Zhan, I received a letter from Wei Qing. Wei Yuan is doing well and he will soon have a sibling.” Wei Ying told Lan Zhan

“Mn.”

“Isn’t it cute? Our little radish will have a radish brother or sister. The baby should be born by the time we reach there”.

“Mn. Come Wei Ying. Sleep.” Lan Zhan took his husband in his arms and turned off the lamp. They were very tired that day having travelled from quite far.

“Lan Zhan, see you tomorrow” Wei Ying murmured, placing a delicate kiss on his chest.

“See you tomorrow, Wei Ying”, Lan Zhan kissed his beloved’s forehead and slept contently.

—

Next day, Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji had their lunch with the Lans.

“Greetings Uncle Lan, Xichen-ge”, Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji paid their respects.

“Wangji, Wuxian, I hope everything is fine.” Lan Qiren asked.

“Yes, uncle,” Lan Wangji replied.

“Xichen-ge, where is my nephew? I have heard so much about him in your letters, now I am eager to meet the baby Lan.” Wei Wuxian asked.

“Qin Su will be bringing him now, Wuxian.” Xichen smiled as he replied. Wei Wuxian was very surprised that Lan Xichen had married Qin Su. They had met at a discussion conference four years back and it was an arranged marriage, a surprising fact for a Lan. But it seemed to work well for them so far. Not everyone will find love like they themselves did. There was mutual respect, and Lan Xichen and Qin Su seemed to be fond of each other. There was harmony in their marriage, and Wei Wuxian suspected that Lan Xichen longed for some kind

of stability after the disastrous war and he had found that in Qin Su. Lan Xichen did seem to be more calm and happy, more settled at present.

As early as Qin Su and Lan Xichen's wedding, Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji had decided to bury Qin Su's birth secret in the past. Since the life trajectory of Qin Su had changed from the previous timeline, there was no need to bring up the old wounds and hurt the mother and daughter. Moreover, the culprit was already dead and if they bring this matter into the open, it would only tarnish the reputation of the women in question.

Just then Madam Lan, Qin-shi came with her son.

"Greetings Madam Lan", both Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji paid respect to her.

"Is this the little Lan? Come to your uncle..." Wei Wuxian took the baby in his arms. "Lan Zhan, look. So cute. He is the cutest thing in the world."

"Mn. He is cute. But Wei Ying is the cutest". Lan Wangji teased.

"*Lan Zhan*", Wei Wuxian's face turned bright vermillion, "not in front of everyone. What has gotten into you? You have become more shameless now, if it was even possible." Wei Wuxian scolded his husband in whispers, even though everyone could hear their conversation clearly. Qin Su giggled into her sleeves. Lan Xichen had a mischievous twinkle in his eyes as if he was preparing to tease him further. Lan Qiren cleared his throat and changed the topic, which saved Wei Wuxian from further embarrassment.

All in all, it was a pleasant way to spend an afternoon with Lan Zhan's family. He was also happy that Lan Wangji would not be the sect heir since Lan Xichen has his own child now. That would make it easier for them to travel and they would not have to visit the Lan sect often.

—

The discussion conference started on the third day of their arrival.

The first one to arrive at the conference was the Jin delegation. A lot of things had happened in the last five years within the Jin sect. Jin Guangshan had died of unmentionable disease just last year, all the whoring he did finally caught up with him. And Jin Zixuan had risen to be the next leader.

“Greeting Sect leader Jin, Madam Jin” Wei Wuxian bowed to the pair. Although he was a little pompous, Jin Zixuan was a decent person and he would do well as the sect leader. He had married a prominent cultivator from the Ouyang sect. It was a political match and Jin Zixuan seemed quite happy about it. They were expecting a baby this year.

“I have heard a lot about your agricultural reforms. I would like to have a discussion about this, Yiling Laozu.” Jin Zixuan requested.

“Of course, Sect leader Jin. We can talk after the conference. Madam Jin, there are Lan healers available in case you are in need of any assistance. There are female Lan disciples present, and you can go to any of them if you need anything.” Wei Wuxian addressed a heavily pregnant Quyang-shi.

“Thank you, Yiling Laozu. I will keep that in mind. It was kind of the Lan sect to offer this hospitality”, she replied. Just then a Lan disciple led them to their designated seat.

Wei Wuxian wondered what Jin Guangyao was doing now. Wuxian was not sure if Jin Guangyao had a hand in his father’s death, for he was powerless this time around without any backing of a prominent cultivator. There was no Lan Xichen to boost him, no sworn brotherhood. Although his father did accept him into the Jin sect, he was cast aside immediately after because Jin Guangyao did not have any use. The former Jin sect leader did try to capitalize on Meng Yao’s contribution in the war. However, everyone was very poor and very busy rebuilding their sects. They did not have the time and energy fawn over the Jin sect, the fact being the Jin sect itself was very poor and did not have anything to offer. Moreover, there was no resentful energy cultivator for everyone to reunite against. It was inevitable that very soon Meng Yao would lose his importance and fade into obscurity. Wei Wuxian guessed that Madam Jin had a huge hand in the falling of Meng Yao. She did not want any competition for her son and she hated her husband’s illegitimate son fiercely. She had made sure that Meng Yao would never rise again after the war. Hence, he was like a toothless snake who could not do anything he wanted to.

There was no Moling Su sect to support Meng Yao either. Jin Zixun was cursed this time as well. But Jin Zixuan was able to use the Curse Detection device Wei Wuxian had come up with, just for this purpose, and found out that Su She was the culprit. Soon Jin Zixun died of the curse. Su She was punished to death by Jin Gaungshan and he never had the opportunity to found his own sect. Right now, Jin Guangyao had no power to harm anyone and he was busy just surviving in a snake pit that is the Jin sect.

—

Next to arrive were the Nie sect.

“Greetings, Yiling Laozu, Hanguang-Jun.” Nie Huaisang bowed to the two of them.

“Sect leader Nie, how are you doing?” Wei Wuxian asked, “Did my Resentment Containment array help you in any way?”

“Yes, Yiling Laozu. Our ancestral hall is safe now and will not cause any harm to others. The Nie sect thanks you for that. Well, now excuse me. I would like to talk to Zewu-Jun.” Nie Huaisang excused himself.

“Yes, of course. Have a pleasant stay.” Wei Wuxian wished him and turned to his husband standing next to him, “it is funny how things happen, eh, Lan Zhan?”.

“Mn.”

“Sometimes fate just cannot be avoided. Nie Mingjue still died of Qi deviation this time. Although your brother playing Cleansing did help him increase his lifespan a bit. No matter what animosity Meng Yao had with Nie Mingjue, he could not do anything to hasten Nie Mingjue to his death this time. And yet, he was still destined to die. The long years of war only caused his problem to worsen. Everything has a cause and effect. But I am glad that Nie Huaisang is not driven by revenge this time and is able to lead the sect well.”

“Mn”.

—

The Jiang sect was the last to arrive. They were no longer a great sect. By the end of the war, they had become a very poor sect. They did not receive much reparation in the war and without that initial investment, they could not bring up their economy. Everything went downhill from there. There were very few disciples left after the war and there were hardly any new disciples who wanted to join the sect. Jiang Wanyin was struggling to maintain the hold on Yunmeng Jiang.

And the Jiang sect leader was very notorious for his temper. No one wanted to marry him and Jiang Wanyin would not make anyone who was not of his bloodline a heir to the sect. All the nearby sects were waiting for the Jiang sect to collapse, so that they could break apart the Yunmeng lands and swallow a part of it. It was only a matter of a few years.

Meishan Yu was still an ally of the Jiang sect given the family ties. But it was like a poor man helping a beggar. As the war dragged on, the alliance had regained more and more lands from the Wens, and in a fit of anger, the Wen sect had attacked all the sects which stayed away from the war. The embers of war had spread across all the sects like a forest fire. Not one sect was able to remain neutral. As a result, the Merishan Yu sect were forced to join the war and they were still recovering from it.

The only slim hope Yunmeng Jiang had was Jiang Yanli, who had married the a sect heir, Liu Kang. The Liu sect was a minor sect associated with the Yunmeng Jiang for many years and they were very loyal. All these years, ever since the war, the Jiang sect had received a lot of help from the Liu sect.

As far as Jiang Yanli was concerned, although it was not a grand life as the Madam of the Jin, it was a comfortable life and Wei Wuxian was sure she would prefer such a life more. The oouple even had two children now, a boy and a girl.

Wei Wuxian and Lan Wangji avoided the Jiang delegation at all costs. They did not want to come across the unpleasant experience of conversing with Jiang Wanyin.

The entire two days of discussion conference went as well as Wei Wuxian expected. The utmost tragedy of all was that there was no wine. He desperately wanted to drink Emperor's Smile on multiple occasions. It was either that, or to smack one or a few cultivators from some random sects who were puffed up with their own importance and spouted nonsense. If Wei Wuxian felt this way, he could very well imagine how his husband was holding up. Lan Zhan never had patience for all this buffoonery. He could not stand the stupidity and the conference hall had an abundance of stupid people.

Finally, much to everyone's relief, the discussion conference was over. And the same cycle would be repeated again the next year. Till then the sects would be busy looking after their own territory.

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The End

For Wei Wuxian and Lang Wangji the ending of the Lan discussion conference call was an end and a new beginning, because this was the last conference they would attend for many many years to come. They finally embraced their dream of becoming a pair of rogue cultivators who roamed the land. After so many years, at the age of 30, they were free of their obligations. And now the whole world awaited them.

Chapter End Notes

Next Chapter - The Legend of Yiling Laozu

Twenty

Chapter Summary

The legend is here!

Chapter Notes

We are at the end. I am so glad for this journey with you all.

I am looking forward to sharing my next work with you.

Finally I will be able to read all your messages at leisure!

See the end of the chapter for [more notes](#)

The Legend

Cloud Recesses: “History of cultivation” class

“Students, please put away your mobile phones. Anyone using your phone during the class would be punished. Last week we were talking about a very prominent cultivator, who existed around 2000 years back. I hope you have completed your assignment, “The Biography of Yiling Laozu” and written a ten page essay on that. Your class monitor will collect your assignment copies. Make sure you submit them today. It makes up to 10% of your marks.

Now we will discuss a few of the key noteworthy achievements of Yilin Laozu. What, according to you, was his biggest contribution to the cultivation world? Who will start first? Oh, yes, Shan Xin”

“Wasn’t his cultivation partner a male? He is also a very important historical figure, Hanguang-Jun, isn't he? This Yiling guy was a total revolutionary and a rock star! So, Yay! for the Gay rights!”

“Thank you, Shan Xin for your insight. Who wants to speak next? Yes, Yang Neng.”

“It is said that he helped build libraries everywhere and he encouraged people to make cultivation accessible to everyone. He took knowledge to common people and elevated their status. I mean, he did help his marital uncle to build a merit based sect and started a trend. Even the Wei sect rose to prominence soon after. Both these sects took in a lot of war orphans resulting from the Sunshot Campaign. I think many such sects emerged later on due to Yiling Laozu. And he made education accessible to everyone. And slowly the bloodline based clans became extinct. And most importantly, those merit based sects were the early prototypes of the modern day school system that we have right now.”

“Good point, Yang Neng. Education is the first step for society to move ahead as a whole. Who else? Ye Zhiqiu, you speak.”

“We cannot neglect his contribution during the Sunshot Campaign. He started a green revolution during the war and that alone made sure that there was food for everyone. He always helped common people. He never liked any of the gentry sects and always remained a rogue cultivator along with his husband.”

“Yes. Well researched. What else have you observed? Wang Kai, what do you think?”

“For me, the best has to be the way he single handedly revolutionised how cultivators look at talismans, arrays, and other auxiliary skills. Before that, there was no new research, no new dissections, and the whole branches of these studies had been in a state of inertia for a very long time. He made these skills popular with his inventions. There were many new inventors after him who followed his example. Instead of inventing devices to just maim and kill, Yiling Laozu led by example and made a lot of inventions dedicated to common people, things they could use in their daily lives and in their professions. He made their life and occupation easier and better. A lot of new inventors followed his ideology”.

“Yes. It is a cultivator’s duty to help people. He did lead by example. Who is next? Yes, Ming Shi.”

“Yiling Laozu and Hanguang-Jun taught many people, didn’t they? They had many disciples. Some of them worked for the imperial court. Some became rogue cultivators themselves. Some joined those merit based sects. Some became inventors like Yiling Laozu. I mean, most of their disciples became prominent figures and influenced a lot of changes for the betterment of the society as a whole, and not just for the cultivation world.”

“ You are right. They both are admirable people. A scholar is far more influential than any of us can imagine. A true teacher can influence and bring changes to the society more effectively than any form of rebellion. A wide network of masters and disciples is a very powerful weapon. Feng Sheng, what do you want to add?”

“Yiling Laozu was so cool. He was the pioneer of cultivating Yin energy. I am curious to read through his treatises written on this. I know they are safeguarded and hidden from the public and you need a lot of permissions from the authorities to read them. One day I will read them.”

“Cultivating Yin energy is still very difficult. It has to be done under supervision and periodic check ups. Do not attempt it on your own. Only Yiling Laozu and a few handful of other people in the last 2000 years have managed to cultivate using both yin and yang energy without any harm. For that you should be completely devoid of the failings of the mortal heart, like greed, jealousy, anger, etc, just like Yiling Laozu. Yes, Li Shimeng.”

“ Do you think they became immortals? Yiling Laozu and Hanguang-Jun. I mean, they did disappear from the cultivation world when they were around 200-220 years old. No one knows where they went. And no one found their bodies. So, did they really die?”

“That is an unsolved mystery even today. There have been many theories and speculations about those. And yes, one of the theories is that they became immortals. We will never know the truth of it. This concludes today’s class. Do not forget to submit our essay. I will grade them this week and will send the results through email. When we meet again next week, we will learn about another great cultivator who was revered so much that there were temples built for him alongside his cultivation partner. Yes, I am talking about Lord Hanguang-Jun”.

“Lan Zhan, Lan Zhan, where are you...?” Wei Ying came running into the house. He left his shoes outside and slipped into his comfy bunny slippers. The slippers were so soft and cuddly to his feet that he hummed in appreciation. Wei Ying had embraced the new age culture of buying gifts for their anniversaries and other important dates, and these bunny slippers was his gift to Lan Zhan. They came in two pairs, the white pair was for Lan Zhan and Wei Ying had kept the black one.

“Kitchen”. Lan Zhan replied.

Wei Ying beamed when he entered the kitchen and saw Lan Zhan cooking while wearing his bunny slippers. He hugged his husband from behind and kissed his neck. The smell of sandalwood assaulted his senses, a smell that Wei Ying always associated with home.

“Hmmm...Lan Zhan, you are so comfortable. Let me stay like this for a while.” Wei Ying murmured into his ears.

“Mn.”

For some time, they just stood there in silence, at peace and content. But Wei Ying could not stand silence for long.

“Lan Zhan, I saw a recipe for Ghost Pepper Jelly on YouTube and it looked spectacular. I am sure it would taste delicious. Will you cook it for me, pretty ge-ge?” Wei Ying whined into Lan Zhan’s ears.

“Send me the link”. Lan Zhan replied.

“You are the best Lan Zhan.” Wei Ying beamed. He could never get enough of his husband’s pampering and he knew his husband would always want to spoil him rotten.

“Lan Zhan, your fan club has created a new video on YouTube. Do you want to check it out?” Wei Ying asked during dinner.

“No.”

“But why?” Wei Ying smiled cheekily, “Your fans are so cute. You know, I visited their fan page. Guess what? They have a channel where they share their own experiments with your recipes. It is all so entertaining and fun. They all love you so much!” Wei Ying looked very proud of his husband.

Lan Zhan had always liked cooking. He had always delighted in making food to feed his husband. With time, slowly he had begun to collect the recipes as they had travelled together, then it escalated into experimenting with new recipes. As of now, he had published several award winning cookbooks. Now, Lan Zhan, was renowned as a first class spiritual chef, specialised in recipes that are nourishing and would boost the spiritual power in a cultivator, recipes that are very nutritious for any cultivator recovering from injuries and illness, and recipes for healing. He also had a series of books based only for the non-cultivators too.

Lan Zhan’s popularity among both cultivators and non-cultivators had led to him becoming a celebrity. Along with his profound skill with food, his calm and noble demeanour had endeared him to many fans. Although, Wei Ying would say that his too good to be true handsomeness also helped him gain a lot of fans.

“Nonsense.” Lan Zhan murmured as he served his Wei Ying a scoop of rice and vegetables.

“Ah! Er-ge ge, it has been ages since you uttered this word! You are, as always, so charming, my dear”, Wei Ying grinned as he teased his husband.

“What happened to your client today? Your session ended later than usual.” Lan Zhan asked in order to change the subject. And for Lan Zhan, what better way to spend the time than talking about his Wei Ying!

All these years, Wei Ying had taken to the art of tattoos. Right now, both his arms were covered entirely with tattoos, predominantly a dragon on his right arm and a phoenix in his left arm. He had his own tattoo studio, where he would offer services for common people as well. Mainly, he was also specialised in tattooing arrays and talismans on the body of cultivators as shields, protections, and sometimes as spells that could be activated in case of any danger.

The very first tattoo Wei Ying had got was the name “Lan Zhan” on his heart. And then he proceeded to laugh for the whole day for how cheesy it was. But Lan Zhan thought differently. His golden eyes had flashed dangerously at the sight of the tattoo. And that night Wei Ying was wrecked and tormented by husband, and it went on for the whole night and even the whole of next day. Lan Zhan did prove his immortal stamina and Wei Ying was left in tears by the end of it.

They also had degrees in various fields like mathematics, physics, chemistry, aeronautics, robotics etc. Every decade they would relocate to a different place and attend college to learn new things. In the course of their travels they also managed to meet a couple of immortals living in seclusion. But that was a story for another time.

“Ha! That idiot Jin Li! He wanted a pair of protection and attack arrays tattooed on his hand. And a number of talismans drawn on his back. I told him in my last meeting that he cannot withstand the pain. But he was with his girlfriend and insisted on pretending to be brave. He was so adamant to show off. But, I waited for him for a long time for our appointment today and he did not come at all. He sent a message that he will not be able to come after two hours of specified time. Husband, I am so irritated right now. I could have spent that time with you, cuddling and watching our favourite series.” Wei Ying pouted.

“Mn. I will take care of Wei Ying tonight.” Lan Zhan replied. Although others may not notice with the way Lan Zhan spoke so calmly, Wei Ying understood the unspoken promise and the underlying seduction in his husband’s tone, and he shivered in anticipation.

—

After dinner, they watched a documentary on the latest findings about space and the stars.

“Human beings are so smart, Lan Zhan.” Wei Ying sighed, “they managed to find ways to invent and develop with their ingenuity. And now they have diminished the distance between cultivators and non-cultivators.”

“Mn. Intelligence is not bound to only cultivators.” Lan Zhan replied.

“Yes. They saw us flying on our swords and they invented aeroplanes, and they made air travel more comfortable than swords. They do not have to face the outside weather, brave the wind and the sun. They sit comfortably inside on their seats, eat, drink, and have fun travelling”.

“Hmmm. Wei Ying wishes to travel in a plane next time.”

“Lan Zhan, you know me so well.”

“Mn.”

“And now they are attempting space travel. Lan Zhan, how great it would be to explore the universe. One day I want us to travel across these galaxies”. Wei Ying wished.

“Soon, my love. That day is not far off” Lan Zhan hugged and pulled Wei Ying into his lap.

“Yes. I cannot wait, er-ge ge, for our next adventure.” Wei Ying leaned on Lan Zhan’s chest with a sigh. He looked forward to the next journey in their eternal life.

That night, as he closed his eyes to sleep, he dreamed of distant stars and planets, of new cultures, of new species. He dreamed of new adventures with his immortal husband.

Chapter End Notes

This is it!! Thank you so much!

End Notes

Age in this story depicts Wei Ying's age at that time. I will be mentioning the age of Wei Ying through out the story.

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